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1. Your reference **13 NOV 2003** REC/P62591/0002. Patent application number
(The Patent Office will fill in this part in) **0326514.7**3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant *(underline all surnames)* **RUSSELL FINEX LIMITED**
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MIDDLESEXPatents ADP number *(if you know it)* **696385003**If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation **UNITED KINGDOM**4. Title of the invention **IMPROVEMENTS IN SCREEN SEPARATORS**5. Name of your agent *(if you have one)* **BOULT WADE TENNANT**

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent
(including the postcode) **VERULAM GARDENS**
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WC1X 8BT

Patents ADP number *(if you know it)* **42001 ✓**

6. Priority: Complete this section if you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, filed in the last 12 months.	Country	Priority application number <i>(if you know it)</i>	Date of filing <i>(day / month / year)</i>
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8. Is a Patents Form 7/77 (Statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent) required in support of this request?	YES
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Answer YES if:

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Description 30

Claim(s) 7

Abstract 1

Drawing(s) 20 +20 ✓

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Priority documents

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Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (*Patents Form 7/77*)

Request for preliminary examination 1
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11.

I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

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Date

13 November 2003

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom Mr. R.E.B. Cross
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IMPROVEMENTS IN SCREEN SEPARATORSField of the Invention

This invention is concerned with vibrating sieve
5 separators for use in sieving materials using vibratory
screens.

Background of the Invention

Such separators are well-known and generally use one or
10 more taut screens of selected mesh size which are mounted in
or on a chassis that is itself supported on a base by
elastomeric mounts, springs or other resilient members. The
chassis is coupled to a motor which drives offset weights to
impart vibration to the chassis and thereby to the screen(s)
15 of the sieve.

Separators are widely used in many industries and the
use is determined by the materials to be sieved or
separated, and these materials themselves determine the mesh
size for the screen.

One industry in which such separators are widely used
is the pharmaceutical industry. In this industry, it is of
special importance that, when sieving a product, the
probability of any sieved material escaping into the
surrounding environment is restricted ideally to zero, but
25 in reality to the lowest possible margin, so that neither
workers nor other equipment nor products can become
contaminated.

There are prior art arrangements to ensure that
material fed to such a separator remains within its confines
30 and one such separator is shown in Figure 1 of the
accompanying drawings.

Figure 1 shows a typical separator 10 comprising a chassis 12 mounted on a rigid base frame 14. The separator has a motor driven out-of-balance weights vibrator 16 mounted on its side. The chassis 12 contains one or more mesh screens each stretched in a frame which is mounted securely over the hopper.

The separator also comprises a cover 18 (or lid) which is mounted on the chassis, and has an inlet 20 through which material to be separated can be loaded into the separator and has an observation port 21.

The cover 18 is fastened to the chassis in sealed engagement therewith by a plurality of toggle or over-centre clamps 22, the locking action of which secures the cover to the chassis. As good as the seals are that are established with such a structure, in practice, particles of sieved materials do escape from such separators and these particles, being of microfine dimensions can collect on surfaces of the separator and elsewhere, with the attendant possibility of contamination when the separator is used for separating other materials. With the arrangement shown in Figure 1, this is particularly true of the surfaces of the toggle or over-centre clamps 22, some of which are not readily accessible or visible. Other surfaces which are visible can be cleaned, rinsed and even sterilised where necessary, but the clamps themselves can provide a source of potential contamination because some of their surfaces are not readily visible.

toggle clamps as in Figure 1 or the known band clamps requires skill and care on the part of the operator, and the procedure is prone to error.

It is therefore an objective of this invention to
5 provide an improved arrangement for securing or clamping the component parts of the separator together.

Embodiments of the invention can also improve the sealing of the various components, i.e. chassis, cover, sieve frames, so that finely divided products do not escape
10 from the product space in the sieve.

In US Patent No. 5,226,546, there is disclosed a separator construction in which circular sieve frames can be loaded through slots in a side wall of a cylindrical chassis of the separator and then held in position by inflating an annular inflatable tube with the various components of the separator held in position by one or two strap ties which extend parallel to the axis of the chassis and are located on the outside of the chassis and clamp the component parts together at a maximum of two locations. This, we believe,
15 can lead to distortion of the components of the separator, especially of the screen frames, albeit by a very small amount, but to an extent that does allow leakage of material
20 from the separator.

25 Summary of the Invention

Accordingly, in one aspect, the present invention provides screen separating apparatus comprising a chassis for supporting a screen frame carrying a sieve screen; said chassis providing a first bearing surface; and one or more
30 clamping members which can be located relative to the chassis to provide a second bearing surface or a combination of second bearing surfaces opposed to said first bearing

surface such that the screen frame can be clamped between the first and second bearing surfaces; wherein the apparatus further comprises at least one expandable element mountable in the chassis to be between said first and second bearing 5 surfaces and expandable to effect said clamping of the screen frame.

The sieve frame is typically circular though it may be of other shape, e.g. elliptical, or even rectangular, and where used herein the terms annular and circumferential or 10 circumference should be understood to include such shapes, unless it is clear that a more specific meaning is intended. Hereinafter, for example, the described and illustrated embodiments use frames which are of circular shape.

Thus, where the chassis accommodates one or more 15 annular frames which are circular, the chassis is typically of circular shape also. The annular clamping arrangement which is conveniently shaped to conform to the shape of the chassis is preferably formed as a cylindrical sheath which fits onto the chassis. This sheath may have an in-turned 20 flange portion which is provided, when the separator is assembled for use, to exert a reactive force, directly or indirectly, onto the sieve frame or a stack of such frames where more than one is used, when the expandable element(s) is/are expanded.

25 The sheath itself is preferably formed as a one-piece cylinder, though if more desirable, it may be of multipart form and where of multipart form. the annular construction

expandable element(s) is/are expanded, the reactive force exerted by the flange portion of the sheath should be exerted not at localised positions, as in the prior art, but uniformly and continuously along as much of the frame(s) as 5 is required to ensure that the frame(s) and the other components of the separator are subjected to an even distribution of that force.

Where the sheath includes an in-turned flange portion, the sheath itself may extend as a skirt around an upper 10 annular portion of the chassis in overlapping relationship and may have a plurality of cut-out locking slots formed therein to co-operate with spaced studs on the exterior of the chassis in a bayonet fitting relationship so that the sheath and the chassis can be locked together, and readily 15 released, when desired, by a single operative to effect maintenance, cleaning and/or replacement.

The separator may comprise a lid or cover, as is typical of separators generally. The cover may include a shoulder portion around its lower periphery, the shoulder 20 portion being of external dimensions such that it sits within the confines of the chassis and can be engaged by the in-turned flange portion of the sheath. The shoulder portion may also have an inner skirt depending therefrom which itself has a continuous flange at its lower edge, 25 which flange is arranged to rest upon a sieve frame, or an uppermost sieve frame where more than one is provided.

The or each sieve frame is supported within the confines of the chassis. The separator normally comprises a hopper through which sieved materials fall into a collecting 30 receptacle. Such a hopper, in a typical truncated cone shape, may have an upper peripherally-braced shelf portion on which the one or more frames are supported. The shelf

portion may have a continuous wall integrally formed with, and upstanding from, the shelf portion, the wall portion being of dimensions such that it forms a snug sliding fit within the chassis. The peripherally-braced shelf portion 5 may itself be supported by the at least one expandable element, which in preferred embodiments of the present invention is a single annular inflatable element which may be provided by an annular inflatable tube or annular bellows mounted in a retaining channel formed by an annular wall 10 extending from an annular ledge welded to the interior of the chassis.

The construction and arrangement of this preferred embodiment is such that, when the separator is assembled, the inflatable member is expanded by pneumatic or hydraulic pressure and urges the hopper, the frame(s) and the skirt of the cover upwardly against the in-turned flange portion of the sheath until the shoulder portion of the cover engages the in-turned flange portion and lifts the sheath until its further movement is prevented by the bayonet fittings.

Thereafter, increased pneumatic/hydraulic pressure in the expandable element traps the frame(s) between the skirt of the cover and the shelf portion of the hopper within the sheath and the chassis.

In an alternative embodiment, the engagement of the sheath and the chassis may be provided by forming the sheath with a lower lip arranged to lie under a lower annular edge of the chassis. If the lower lip extends inwardly of the

channel is formed between it and the chassis to retain the expandable member therein.

The invention also provides screen separating apparatus comprising a chassis for supporting a screen frame carrying 5 a sieve screen, a cover to enclose a space above the sieve screen to contain material to be separated, a hopper to collect fines passing through the sieve screen, at least one inner seal to seal between the cover and the hopper around the circumference of the screen frame when the apparatus is 10 in use, a sheath surrounding said inner seal, at least one outer seal to seal between the sheath and at least one of the cover and the hopper to provide an enclosed volume between the sheath, the cover and the hopper, and an inlet connecting to said enclosed space to enable said enclosed 15 space to be pressurised. This arrangement provides positive leak prevention from the product space in the sieve enclosed by the cover and the collection hopper.

Brief Description of the Drawings

20 These and other characteristic features of embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

25 Figure 2 is a cross-sectional view showing the internal construction of a first embodiment of a separator and apparatus according to the present invention;

Figure 2a is a close-up cross-sectional view of the right-hand side of the separator shown in Figure 2;

30 Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 2a but illustrating a second embodiment of the invention;

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 2a but illustrating a third embodiment of the invention;

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 2a but illustrating a fourth embodiment of the invention;

Figure 5a is a cross-sectional view of a variant of the fourth embodiment shown in Figure 5;

5 Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 2a but illustrating a fifth embodiment of the invention;

Figure 6a is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 6 of a modification of that embodiment;

10 Figure 7 is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 2a but illustrating a sixth embodiment of the invention;

Figure 8 is a cross-sectional view similar to Figure 2a but illustrating a seventh embodiment of the invention;

Figure 9 is a cross-sectional view of a detail of Figure 8;

15 Figure 10 is a perspective view of a mobile separator according to the present invention illustrating one manner of mounting a sheath of an apparatus according to the invention;

20 Figure 11 is a perspective view of the separator of Figure 10 taken from a diametrically opposite view;

Figure 11a is a close-up perspective view of a motor mounting block shown in outline in Figure 11;

25 Figure 11b is a further close-up perspective view of a motor housing of a separator according to the present invention, the housing being mountable to the mounting block shown in Figure 11a;

Figures 11c to 11e are perspective views of details of the embodiment of Figure 11b, namely the detail of FIGURE 11C, FIGURE 11D and FIGURE 11E.

Figure 13 is a perspective view of a mobile separator illustrating a second manner of mounting a sheath of apparatus according to the present invention;

5 Figure 14 is a perspective view of the separator of Figure 13 showing the sheath in released condition;

Figure 15 is a cross-sectional view of a variant of the first embodiment shown in Figures 2 and 2a;

10 Figure 16a is a cross-sectional view illustrating a further modification providing positive prevention of leaks and cross-contamination;

Figure 16b is a cross-sectional view of a further modification;

15 Figure 17 is a schematic diagram of a preferred pneumatic control system for embodiments of the invention;

Figure 18 is a perspective view of the embodiments of separator with bayonet-type connections between the sheath and the chassis; and

20 Figure 19 is a cross-sectional view of a further embodiment with two stacked screen decks.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments

Figures 2 and 2a shows in section a separator embodying the invention comprising a chassis 40 which may be mounted on a mobile carriage 42, which is shown in Figures 10 to 12. The chassis 40 is circularly cylindrical having an external diameter normally between 10cm and 200cm or more, typically between 40cm and 120cm. The chassis 40 is mounted by resilient feet on a platform 44 of the carriage and has a motor 46 attached thereto (not shown in Figure 2) which is eccentrically weighted to cause the motor to impart vibration to the chassis.

Mounted on the chassis and attached thereto by a plurality of bayonet fittings or couplings 48 of an annular clamping arrangement evenly positioned around the chassis is a sheath 50 which carries diametrically opposed handles 52 to enable the sheath to be coupled to or uncoupled from the chassis. Secured by the sheath is a lid or cover which has an inlet 56 at its uppermost part through which material can be poured into the separator. The cover also has an observation port which is not shown in Figure 2.

Shown in part section in Figure 2 is a hopper 58 which is mounted from within the chassis to depend therefrom to funnel sieved material into an appropriate receptacle.

The chassis can be mounted either on a fixed base or a mobile base such as the mobile carriage partly shown in Figure 2.

Within the chassis 40, there is provided an annular ledge 60 which is welded or otherwise fixed to the interior face of the chassis. This ledge 60 supports an annular wall 62 concentric with and spaced from the interior face of the chassis, the ledge, the wall and the interior face of the chassis, thereby defining a channel 64 which houses an expandable element in the form of an annular inflatable tube 66. The tube is shown in the drawing as being of square cross-section though in practice it may be of any convenient cross-section, or may be of bellows construction.

The ledge 60 is provided with one or more apertures 68 through which one or more tubes or the like 70 can pass

to connect the channel 64 to an external air source.

110
111
112

portion 70 which at its outer periphery extends upwardly as an annular wall 72 which has an external diameter such that it forms a clearance sliding fit within the chassis 40. The shelf portion is supported by an annular collar 74 which is 5 welded to the hopper and is of elbow cross-section to provide a surface 76 against which the tube 66 can be inflated.

The shelf portion 70 of the hopper provides support for a frame 78 of a first or lower sieve screen, the frame 78 being, as previously stated, of circular shape and resting 10 on the upper surface of the shelf portion 70. The frame in this example is of square-sectioned tubular construction and supports a tautly held screen (not shown) therein. The frame is seated in a U-shaped or L-section gasket 80 formed 15 of a suitable preferably conductive resilient material to provide a sealing and locating function, to prevent product by-passing the mesh or escaping to the outside of the sieve. Mounted above the first, lower, frame 78 is a second, upper, frame 82 of similar construction to that of frame 78. The 20 two frames 78 and 82 are separated by an annular gasket 86 which provides a similar function to gasket 80. The gasket 86 is also shaped to brace the two frames away from the wall 72 of the hopper 58, and extends over the top of the frame 82 to provide a seat for the cover 54. Frame 78 may carry 25 the primary separator mesh or screen and frame 82 may carry a secondary safety mesh or a magnetic separator. Instead frame 78 may be just a spacer, and frame 82 may carry the single mesh or screen.

The cover 54 is of generally circular cylinder shape 30 having a shallow truncated cone top portion 87 which includes the inlet 56 at its apex. Around the lower perimeter of the main cylindrical part 88 of the cover is

formed a shoulder portion 90, depending from which is an annular, inner skirt 92 which lies inside the sheath 50. At its lower edge, the skirt 92 is formed with an in-turned annular flange 94, which rests upon the gasket 86 over the 5 spacer 82.

When the sheath 50 is located in position over the cover 54, an annular in-turned flange portion 96 formed around the upper edge of the sheath 50 overlaps the shoulder portion 90 of the cover 54. The flange portion 96 is 10 encased in a resilient annular gasket 98 to seal with the shoulder portion 90 of the cover. As with the other gaskets, the gasket 98 may be formed of any suitable resilient material (e.g. silicone, polypropylene).

As can be understood from a study of Figure 2 especially, the apparatus according to the present invention is assembled onto the chassis 40 by firstly locating the inflatable tube 66 within its channel 64 and then fitting the hopper 58 into the chassis interior so that the hopper rests on the innermost edge of the wall 62 with the lower 20 surface 76 of the collar 74 overlying the inflatable tube or bellows 66.

Thereafter, gaskets 80 and 86 are fitted to the frames 78 and 82, the frame 78 is placed on the shelf portion 70 of the hopper 58, and the second frame 82 is then placed on the 25 first, lower, frame 78 and pressed into position.

The cover 54 is placed on the spacer 86, and the sheath ~~then fitted over the cover so that the protruding flange~~
~~portion 96 lies over the shoulder portion 90 of the cover~~
~~and rests upon the gasket 86.~~

47, the sheath is twisted so that the studs 48 are engaged in the slots to prevent the sheath from being lifted off again.

Once the sheath 50 is so engaged, and holds the cover 5 54 in place, the inflatable tube 66 is inflated via a pump (not shown) filling the tube with compressed air or other suitable fluid causing the tube to inflate. Inflation of the tube causes expansion of the tube, and the expansion exerts an upward force, as indicated by the arrow F, on the 10 collar 74 thereby pressing the shelf portion 70 against the two frames 78, 82, and transmitting this force, via the flange 94, skirt 92 and shoulder portion 90, to the flange portion 96 of the sheath 50. The sheath is thus caused to take up any slack in the bayonet fittings.

15 Thereafter pressure caused by inflation of the tube 66 causes compression of the gaskets 80, 86 and 98 until the components of the separator are tightly secured.

A perspective view of the separator of Figures 2 and 2a is shown in Figure 18, which best illustrates the bayonet 20 couplings with studs 48 and slots 47.

Figure 2 shows a construction employing two frames 78, 82. More than two frames may be used, in which case a sheath having sufficient depth to accommodate the height of the frames is required. Alternatively, the studs of the 25 bayonet fittings may include a screw-threaded section, and the chassis can then be provided with threaded apertures at different heights so that change in the number of frames can be accommodated by changing the position of the studs.

In other embodiments, the separator may have two or 30 more stacked screen decks carrying progressively finer sieve screens. Then the sheath has sufficient depth to clamp together the multiple decks and screen frames. A separator

with two sieve decks is shown in Figure 19 having an upper deck unit 40 clamped between an upper screen frame 425 and the lower frame 82.

In a second embodiment of the present invention, shown
5 in Figure 3, the sheath 50 is formed integrally with the
cover 54. As can be seen from comparison with Figure 2, the
sheath 50 is foreshortened and comprises an extended skirt
portion joined to the main cylindrical body of the cover 54
by a shoulder portion 100 providing a peripheral flange that
10 seats against the spacer 86. This construction removes the
necessity for a separate sheath. In all other respects, the
second embodiment is substantially identical to the first
embodiment.

A third embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 4, wherein a cross-section of a part of a separator illustrates a chassis 110 which is mounted on a base 112. The chassis is cylindrical and of annular shape when viewed in plan. The chassis has an annular ledge 114 which is welded or otherwise formed fixed to the interior face of the chassis 110 and this annular ledge supports an annular wall 116 concentric with and spaced from the interior face of the chassis, so that the ledge, the wall and the interior face of the chassis define a channel 118. As in Figure 2, the channel 118, like the channel 64, houses an expandable element in the form of an annular inflatable tube 120 similar to the tube 66 of Figure 2.

The Lodge #114 is located within the confines of the
Forest Service's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

The separator comprises a hopper 124 which has an annular shelf portion 126 which is protected by a resiliently compressible annular gasket 128. The shelf portion 126 rests on the inflatable tube 120.

5 The shelf portion 126 supports first, lower and second, upper sieve frames 130, 132 which are mounted in an annular resiliently compressible annular gasket housing 134 on which is supported the cover 136 of the separator. The cover, though of different appearance from that shown in Figure 2, nevertheless has the same function as that of cover 54
10 therein and includes an inlet through which material can be delivered to the sieve screens and an optional observation port.

In this embodiment, a sheath 138 which is of annular form, and of multipart construction, as hereinafter described, envelops the chassis 110 almost completely. The sheath 138 has a skirt portion 140 which embraces the exterior of the chassis 110 and integrally-formed upper and lower in-turned annular flanges 142, 144 respectively. The lower flange 144 extends inwardly below the chassis 110 to provide support for the inflatable tube located below the ledge 114, and the upper flange 142 extends inwardly to overlap a peripheral flange 146 of the cover 136, thereby trapping the two frames 130, 132, shelf portion 126 and the two inflatable tubes 120 122.
25

When either or both of the tubes 120, 122 is/are inflated, pressure is exerted by the tube 122 on the lower flange 144 and, by inflation of the tube 120, on the frame housing 134 and thus against the upper flange 142. Due to the compressible nature of the gasket 128 and of the housing 30 134, the structure thus assembled is held fast and can

withstand vibration imparted to the separator without leakage of material therefrom.

Turning now to Figure 5, there is shown therein a fourth embodiment of the present invention which is similar 5 to that of Figure 4 (the same reference numerals are therefore used, where appropriate, as are used in Figure 4), except in that the lower inflatable tube 122 is removed completely and the annular ledge 114 is supported directly on anti-vibration mounts 210 in spaced relationship to the 10 base 112 of the separator. Without the presence of the inflatable tube, the in-turned lower flange 144 of the sheath 140 only engages the lower edge of the chassis 110.

The resilient mounts 210 are formed of any suitable material, e.g. vulcanised natural or synthetic rubbers, or 15 plastics materials, capable of absorbing vibration transmitted from the motor, so that the base remains substantially vibration free during use, and are located in recesses 212 provided in the base 112. Mounts in the form of springs may also be used. Further detail of the 20 construction of the fourth embodiment can be gleaned from the variant thereof which is shown in Figure 5a. In this Figure is shown the manner in which the ledge 114 is used to anchor the chassis 110 to the base frame 112. Each support 214 for the base frame 112 has a bush 216 mounted on its upper extremity, the bush being recessed to receive the head 25 of a bolt 218 which extends upwardly through an aperture in the base frame 112 and parallel through a bore 120 in the

As stated above, the construction shown in Figure 5a is a variant of that shown in Figure 5. In this Figure 5a embodiment, it can be seen by comparison with Figure 5 that the chassis 110 and the sheath 140 are extended upwardly 5 above the upper screen frame 132, and that the cover 136 has a skirt portion 226 analogous to the skirt portion 92 of the first embodiment shown in Figure 2, the skirt portion 226 extending from a shoulder portion 228 of the cover to an in-turned flange encased in a gasket 232 seated on the upper 10 screen frame 132.

In Figure 6, a further, fifth embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. One factor that has to be considered in the construction of a separator according to the invention is that of earthing the separator to ensure 15 that static charge does not build up on the separator or on the screen frame and so cause potential harm to an operator or charge particles delivered to the sieve screens. The embodiment of Figure 6 provides a solution.

The construction of the embodiment of Figure 6 is very 20 similar to that of Figure 5. The significant difference therefrom is that in the Figure 6 embodiment, the sheath 140 is provided with a plurality of earthing probes 240 which extend through apertures provided therefor in the chassis 110. Where only a single screen frame is employed in the 25 separator, then one or more probes 240 can be provided, aligned with the plane of the frame but, where two or more screens, and therefore screen frames, are provided, probes are provided for both frames. The probes are provided with tapers whereby they can pierce the resilient gaskets 30 protecting the frames. In all other respects, the construction of the embodiment of Figure 6 is closely similar to that of Figure 5. It will of course be clearly

understood that the provision of earthing probes is equally applicable to all embodiments of the present invention.

Instead of the illustrated earthing probes, the parts of the separator may be earthed using electrically conductive

5 material for the resilient gaskets, or interconnecting with earthing braids.

A modification of the embodiment shown in Figure 6 can be seen in Figure 6a, wherein the chassis is foreshortened and does not include a ledge 114. Instead, the chassis 110 is formed as a simple cylinder while the sheath 140 has an in-turned flange 145 that extends inwardly further than the flange 144 of Figure 6, and supports an annular ring 147 that in turn abuts against the lower edge of the chassis 110 and supports the inflatable tube 120.

15 The manner in which a sheath such as is illustrated in Figures 4 to 6a can be mounted in a separator according to the invention is shown generically in Figures 10, 11 and 12. In Figures 10 and 11, the separator is viewed from opposite sides. The motor 46 has a flange 150 secured to a mating 20 flange on chassis 166 (see Figure 12). Chassis 166 corresponds to chassis 40 of Figures 2, 2a and 3 and to chassis 110 of Figures 4 to 7)

As can be seen in each of Figures 10, 11 and 12, the 25 sheath 138, is formed in two halves 153, 154 each of which is a mirror image of the other and extends around almost one half of the chassis 166 save for the motor mount, against side faces of which adjacent ends of the sheath bedrest above.

1. READING DIRECTIONS

pair of hinge plates 156 welded thereto, each plate of a pair having an integral bush 158 for receiving a steel hinge pin 160 which passes through both bushes of each pair.

Each hinge pin 160 passes through a respective pin hole 5 which is formed in a mounting block 164 which is welded to the chassis 166, and through a bearing aperture in a retaining plate 168 which is welded in situ between the mounting block 164 and the chassis 166.

At their opposite ends, i.e. those ends opposite the 10 hinges, the two halves 153, 154 of the sheath, when closed onto the chassis are in substantially end-to-end relationship, as shown in Figures 11c, 11d and 11e. At these adjacent ends, each half 153, 154 of the sheath is formed with a tongue portion 170, 172 respectively, which 15 includes an out-turned flange portion 174, 176 respectively. These tongue portions 170, 172 are positioned flush against the outer surface of the chassis 166 between a magnetic keeper 178 mounted on the chassis 166 and a U-shaped horizontal hinge 180 welded or otherwise attached to the 20 chassis.

When the two halves 153, 154 are closed onto the chassis 166, the two flange portions 174, 176 are in closely-separated relationship, the separation corresponding to the width of a slot 182 formed in a magnetic locking bar 25 184 which is used to clamp the two halves 153, 154 together on the chassis 166. The bar 184 is provided with a pair of hooks 186, 188 which hook over the horizontal hinge 180 to act as a pivot for the bar 184. At its opposite end, the bar 184 has a magnet 190 inset into the body of the bar. 30 This magnet 190 co-operates with the magnetic keeper 178 to hold the locking bar 184 in situ when it is moved from the position shown in Figure 11d to that shown in Figure 11e.

The magnetic locking bar/keeper arrangement described above may use permanent magnets or electro-magnets.

This construction permits ready locking of the two halves 153, 154 of the sheath 152 and quick release when it is required to uncouple them. The two halves can then be parted and swung back from the chassis 166 as shown in Figure 12, and completely removed from the chassis of the separator by removal of the two hinge pins 160 and then lifting away from the chassis 166 with equal ease of remounting when the separator is again required for use. Instead of the magnetic arrangement described, an over-centre latch may be used to secure the halves of the sheath together.

As mentioned above, the collar 150 of the motor is mounted on the mounting block 164.

The manner in which the separator can be assembled and dis-assembled is shown in Figure 12, which shows a mobile version of the present invention. As illustrated in Figure 12, the cover of the separator has been removed and the two halves 153, 154 of the sheath released and are swung away from the chassis 166, either prior to removal of a screen frame or prior to closure of the two halves after replacement or cleaning of such a frame of frames.

In the structure shown in Figure 12, there is also shown a variant of the locking system for locking the two halves 153, 154 against the chassis 166. Instead of the tongue portions 170, 171 shown in Figures 11a and 11b, the

Pivots mounted on the chassis 166 are two toggled hinge pins 202, 204 that can pivot between a horizontal position as shown in Figure 12 and an upright position parallel with the external face of the chassis 166 in which 5. they engage the flange portions 194, 196 to retain the latter in position against the chassis.

With such an arrangement, the two halves of the sheath 152 can be quickly released, and subsequently coupled around the chassis 166.

10 Turning now to Figure 7, there is shown therein a further, sixth embodiment of the present invention. In this embodiment, the ledge 114 does not have an internal annular wall 116 and the shelf portion 126 of the hopper rests on the ledge with the two frames in turn supported on the shelf 15 portion.

In this embodiment, a further variation from the preceding embodiments is that the at least one expandable element is provided by a plurality of pneumatic (or hydraulic) piston-and-cylinder arrangements 250 which are 20 mounted on and secured to the base 112 and extend upwardly therefrom to engage the underside of the annular ledge 114.

25 In this construction, and in that of the seventh embodiment of the present invention, shown in Figures 8, 9 and described below, a different arrangement is provided for mounting the sheath 138 relative to the chassis 244 of the separator.

The construction shown in Figure 7 employs a sheath 246 which is formed by a plurality of sheath segments 252 instead of the two sheath halves shown in Figures 10, 11 and 30 12. The manner in which the segments are mounted and can be moved is shown generally in Figures 13 and 14, to which further reference will be made below.

In the embodiment of Figure 7, lower in-turned flange portions 253 of the sheath segments 252 are shown pivotally coupled to the piston-and-cylinder arrangements 250 by pivot pins 254 such that each segment can be pivoted from a non-engaging position to the position shown in Figure 7. Each segment 252 has an upper in-turned flange portion 256 which overlaps a peripheral flange 146 of the cover and carries a resilient gasket 258 which is adapted to engage the peripheral flange 146 along the circumferential length of the segment.

A similar arrangement is shown in Figures 8 and 9 wherein, instead of being hingedly coupled to the piston-and-cylinder arrangements 250, the sheath segments 252 are each mounted on a plate 259 which is pivotally coupled to a hinge plate 260 which is itself similarly coupled to a bracket 262 welded to the underside of an in-turned flange 264 of the chassis 244. The positions of the pivotal couplings of the sheath segment plates to their respective hinge plates, and of the hinge plates to their respective brackets is such as to provide a toggle arrangement as shown in Figure 9.

In Figure 8 an expandable element 266, similar to those used in earlier embodiments is located between the flange 264 and the annular shelf portion 126 of the hopper 124.

25 The general construction using a plurality of sheath segments 252 can be seen in Figures 13 and 14. and by comparison with the construction shown in Figures 11 to 13.

toggled when in the chassis enclosing position shown in Figure 13, as described with reference to Figure 8, or otherwise can be held in position, as with the embodiment of Figure 7, by expansion of the piston-and-cylinder arrangements thereof.

To release the segments from the positions shown in either of Figures 7 and 8, the pneumatic/hydraulic pressure is first released to allow the segments to be pivoted outwardly from the chassis 244, as in Figure 7.

In either construction, the segments then adopt the position shown in Figure 14 to permit the cover to be removed for the purpose of replacing or carrying out maintenance of the screens and/or the interior of the separator.

Figure 15 shows an improvement of the first embodiment described above with reference to Figures 2 and 2a. Components of the apparatus which are the same or similar as in the first embodiment are identified with the same reference numerals.

Instead of the annular wall 62 welded or otherwise fixed to the annular ledge 60 as described and illustrated in the first embodiment and shown in Figures 2 and 2a, in the modification shown in Figure 15, there is an angle ring 300 providing an upwardly extending flange 301 corresponding to the annular wall 62 of the first embodiment, and a horizontal annular flange 302 which fits inside the outer wall of the chassis 40. A flat annular gasket 303 supports the angle ring 300 on the annular ledge 60.

The angle ring 300 effectively provides the annular channel 64 of the first embodiment and as illustrated in Figures 2 and 2a, which contains the expandable element or annular bellows 66. When the bellows 66 is expanded under

pressure as described previously, the annular gasket 303 provides a good seal between the angle ring 300 and the annular ledge 60 of the chassis.

Importantly, the annular ring 300 and the gasket 303
5 can be removed from the chassis structure to facilitate
cleaning.

An additional modification in the embodiment of Figure
15 is the design of the annular shelf portion of the hopper
58. In the embodiment of Figure 15, the hopper 58 has an
10 outwardly extending flange portion 310 which is now of
sufficient radial width that the radially inner part of the
flange portion 310 can rest directly on the upper edge of
the vertical flange 301 of the angle ring 300, when the
bellows 66 is not inflated. The mesh frame 78 then rests
15 directly on the upper surface of the annular flange 310, and
the bellows 66 acts directly on the under surface of the
annular flange 310.

Importantly, this design avoids the enclosed space
defined by the annular shelf portion 70 and lower surface 76
20 of the hopper 58 in the first embodiment as illustrated in
Figures 2 and 2a. Such enclosed spaces can be undesirable,
especially when the separator is used for processing
pharmaceuticals.

Finally, as can be seen in Figure 15, the gasket 80 of
25 the first embodiment in Figure 2a is now a U-shaped gasket
320 as shown in Figure 15.

In other respects, the modified embodiment of Figure 15
is the same as shown in Figure 2a.

leak prevention from the sieve. An additional circumferential seal 330 is provided between the sheath 50 and an outer surface of the chassis 40. In the illustrated embodiment, this seal 330 may comprise an annular inflatable tube 331 mounted in a groove 332 formed in the outer face of the chassis wall. The tube 331 is connected by a supply conduit 333 to the pressurised gas inlet 69 for the main inflatable bellows 66, so that when the bellows 66 is inflated, so also is the tube 331 so as to form a gas-tight seal between the chassis 40 and the sheath 50. Other sealing arrangements may be used for seal 330, such as a simple (non-inflatable) O-ring or annular gasket.

In addition a gas connection 340 is provided at an upper part of the sheath 50 so that the interior space defined by the sheath unit 50, the inner skirt 92 of the lid or cover, the gaskets 86 and 320, the periphery of the hopper 58, the bellows 66, the angle ring 300, the annular gasket 303, the annular ledge 60, and the chassis wall 40, can be pressurised, e.g. to 0.5 bar gauge. This over pressure then prevents any residual leakage from within the sieve product space through the seals between the cover 54 and the hopper 58. Also, leakage of possibly contaminating ambient air into the product space is prevented.

It is not critical to provide a perfect seal between the sheath 50 and the chassis and cover, so long as the desired over pressure can be maintained. However, a pressure sensing leak detection system may be provided if required to monitor the over pressure in the region enclosed by the sheath 50.

Figure 16b illustrates a variation of the arrangement for positive leak prevention using internal bayonet fittings comprising studs 48 engaging in slots provided in an

internal flange 340 secured to the inside face of the sheath 50. This variation provides a smoother exterior surface to the assembled separator.

The positive leak prevention system may also be applied 5 to the separator with integrally formed cover and sheath of Figure 3. Then an inflatable or O-ring seal such as seal 330 in Figures 16a and 16b may be provided between the sheath or extended skirt portion 50 of the cover of the Figure 3 embodiment and the chassis 40, conveniently at a 10 location above the studs 48 of the bayonet fittings. Seal 86 for the sieve frame 82 makes a good seal with the shoulder 100 of the cover, when clamping pressure is applied by the bellows 66. A gas connection (not shown in Figure 3) can be provided through the skirt portion 50 to pressurise 15 the space bounded by the skirt portion 50, the shoulder 100, the frames 82 and 78, the hopper 58, the bellows 66 and the chassis 40.

Figure 17 illustrates a pneumatic control system which may be used with embodiments of this invention.

20 A supply of pressurised air is connected at push connector 400 and is fed to the bellows 66 (together with the annular sealing tube 331 if fitted) by means of an outlet push connector 401. The pressure supplied to the sieve through the outlet 401 is controlled by a pressure 25 regulator and gauge unit 402.

A T-piece 403 in the pressure line supplies the applied pressure to a pressure sensor 404 which may be connected to a control unit 405. The control unit 405 may be connected to a power source 406.

The pneumatic control system also includes a second T-piece 405 connecting to exhaust via an exhaust valve 406. In addition an isolator valve 407 enables the inlet pressure supply to be isolated from the sieve.

5 In operation, the bellows 66 of the separator unit is inflated to apply the required clamping pressure by closing the exhaust valve 406 and opening the isolation valve 407. These valves may be manual. Then, so long as the applied pressure as sensed by the sensor 404 exceeds the threshold 10 (e.g. 5 bar) the sieve can be started in the usual way. If the applied pressure drops below the threshold, the sieve stops automatically and cannot be restarted until the pressure is restored.

If the leak detection system of Figure 16 is fitted, an 15 additional sensor may detect pressure change in the scaled region behind the sheath 50 and again stop the sieve until corrected.

It will be clearly understood from the foregoing description of various embodiments of the invention, that 20 various combinations, other than those described, of the characteristic features of the invention are possible without departing from the scope of the invention so defined by the claims. For example, the sheath could be formed of various combinations as a hybrid of the structures shown in Figures 10, 11 and 12 and Figures 13 and 14 whereby the 25 sheath can be formed of segments which are themselves pivotally connected about vertical pivots to fold back about a hinge such as that shown in Figures 10 to 12. It will also be appreciated that the expandable elements of the 30 various embodiments can be interchanged according to what is optimum for requirements.

In embodiments described above, the expandable element is an inflatable continuous tube or annular bellows extending around the circumference of the screen frame. However, in other embodiments, multiple lengths of 5 inflatable tube or bellows elements may be used distributed around the screen frame to provide a substantially even clamping force.

In another embodiment the annular bellows may be replaced by an annular ring and at least two pneumatic or 10 hydraulic rams operable to drive the ring to effect said clamping.

Other embodiments may use magnetic force to provide the expansion force for said expandable element or elements. Electro-magnets may be employed which can be switched on and 15 off to apply clamping when required. Opposed permanent magnets may also be used and rotated from an opposing position when switching from repulsion (providing clamping pressure) to a released non-repelling position.

It should also be clearly understood that, though 20 described in specific arrangements, it is possible to re-arrange the assembly of the frame(s) and expandable element(s) can be adjusted, provided that a clamping arrangement is achieved with the sheath enclosing the chassis. Thus, for example, the arrangement shown in Figure 25 4 could include two inflatable tubes, one above and one below the shelf portion 126 of the hopper 134.

The various embodiments of the invention described above are as follows:

1. A screen printing apparatus comprising a chassis having a

minimise external crevices and other surface structures which can trap unwanted dirt or contaminants.

b) The clamping arrangements described, in particular that using the single clamping sleeve located around the cover of the separator structure, substantially simplifies the operation of clamping the various screening elements together, so that operator error is minimised.

c) The provision of pneumatic or hydraulically operated inflatable elements to provide the clamping pressure permits a reliable clamping pressure to be applied and provides the possibility of automatic pressure monitoring for added security.

d) Embodiments of the invention ensure that the clamping pressure is applied substantially uniformly around the entire circumference of the sieve frame, thereby improving sealing between the various clamped elements of the separator.

e) The additional provision in embodiments of the invention of an over pressure in the enclosed region between the sleeve and the clamped elements of the separator, enables positive leak prevention from the product space within the separator and prevents incursion of contaminants from ambient atmosphere.

The embodiment providing positive leak prevention which is described above and illustrated in Figure 16, also incorporates the features of Figure 2 relating to securing and clamping together the various elements of the separator. It should be understood, however, that the positive leak prevention arrangement can be used with other designs of separator, for example designs which need not incorporate the one or more expandable elements to clamp the screen frame between a first bearing surface associated with the

chassis of the separator and a second bearing surface
associated with a clamping element. The positive leak
prevention arrangement can be applied to sieves with prior
art clamping arrangements sealing together the hopper and
5 cover around the screen frame of the separator, modified to
include a sleeve which is sealed to one of the hopper and
cover so as to define the required enclosed space
encompassing the clamp seals between the separator
components. Other possibilities will be apparent to the
10 skilled person.

CLAIMS

1. Screen separating apparatus comprising
a chassis for supporting a screen frame carrying a
5 sieve screen, said chassis providing a first bearing
surface; and
one or more clamping members the or each of which is
movable into a clamping position in which it is located
relative to the chassis to provide a second bearing surface
10 or one of a combination of second bearing surfaces opposed
to said first bearing surface such that the screen frame can
be clamped between the first and second bearing surfaces;
wherein the apparatus further comprises at least one
expandable element mountable in the chassis to be between
15 said first and second bearing surfaces and expandable to
effect said clamping of the screen frame.
2. Apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the second
bearing surface or the combination of second bearing
20 surfaces extends over at least half of the circumference of
the screen frame.
3. Apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said clamping
member comprises a sheath which can be fastened to the
25 chassis and which has an in-turned flange portion arranged
to provide said second bearing surface or said combination
of second bearing surfaces.
4. Apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said sheath is
30 of unitary construction.

5. Apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said sheath is cylindrical and the apparatus includes a plurality of bayonet coupling fitments spaced around the chassis whereby the sheath can be releasably fastened to the chassis.

5

6. Apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the sheath is formed in two parts each of which is pivotable, at one end about a respective hinge axis relative to the chassis to move between a position in which the sheath part embraces a
10 respective part of the chassis and a position in which the sheath part is swung away from said respective part.

7. Apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the two sheath parts are hingedly mounted with the hinges adjacent, and
15 free ends of the sheath parts are each adapted to lie adjacent one another when in their chassis - embracing positions, with a locking device being provided for securing the sheath parts in said chassis - embracing positions.

20 8. Apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said locking device is magnetic.

9. Apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the sheath comprises a plurality of segments, each pivotable about a
25 respective hinge axis lying in a plane substantially parallel to the plane of the sieve screen, such that each segment can be moved between a closed position in which the

10. Apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein said respective hinge axes include an over-centre toggle construction operable to draw the in-turned flange portion of the sheath segment towards said first bearing surface.

5

11. Apparatus according to any of Claims 3 to 10, further comprising a cover to rest on said screen frame and enclose the sieve screen, the cover having a peripheral shoulder portion for engagement by said in-turned flange portion of

10 the sheath.

12. Apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein said cover has a skirt portion depending from said shoulder portion to engage said sieve frame.

15

13. Apparatus according to any of Claims 1 to 10 further comprising a removable cover to enclose a product region above the sieve screen, said one or more clamping members being effective when in the clamping position to retain the 20 cover clamped, by expansion of said expandable element, with the screen frame between the first and second bearing surfaces, and being movable when the expandable member is not expanded, from said clamping position to permit removal of said cover.

25

14. Apparatus according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 comprising a removable cover to enclose a product region above the sieve screen, said cover providing said clamping member and having an extended skirt portion providing a sheath which can be 30 fastened to the chassis and a peripheral flange portion providing said second bearing surface.

15. Apparatus according to any preceding claims further comprising a hopper mounted in said chassis to collect fines passing through the sieve screen, said hopper having an annular shelf portion extending between said first and
5 second bearing surfaces to be clamped therebetween together with the screen frame.

10 16. Apparatus according to any preceding claim and including at least one said screen frame.

17. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein said chassis is adapted to support a circular screen frame.

15 18. Apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein said at least one expandable member comprises an inflatable member.

20 19. Apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said inflatable member is of bellows construction.

20 20. Apparatus according to Claim 19, wherein said chassis is adapted to support a circular screen frame and said at least one expandable member is of annular shape.

25 21. Apparatus according to any of Claims 1 to 17, wherein said at least one expandable member comprises a piston-and-cylinder arrangement.

23. Apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said piston-and-cylinder arrangement is hydraulically operable.

24. Apparatus according to any of Claims 1 to 17, wherein
5 said at least one expandable element comprises an annular ring and at least two pneumatic or hydraulic rams operable to drive the ring to effect said clamping.

25. A vibratable screen separator comprising a chassis
10 providing a continuous bearing surface for directly or indirectly supporting a planar sieve frame, and at least two clamping members, each of which is elongate and is mounted to clamp a respective length of the sieve frame against the frame bearing surface when in a first position and to be movable between said first position and a non-clamping 15 position.

26. Apparatus according to any preceding claim and including
20 a cover to enclose a space above the sieve screen to contain material to be separated,
a hopper to collect fines passing through the sieve screen,
25 at least one inner seal to seal between the cover and the hopper around the circumference of the screen frame when the apparatus is in use,
a sheath surrounding said inner seal,
at least one outer seal to seal between the sheath and at least one of the cover and the hopper to provide an 30 enclosed volume between the sheath, the cover and the hopper,

and an inlet connecting to said enclosed space to enable said enclosed space to be pressurised.

27. Screen separating apparatus comprising

5 a chassis for supporting a screen frame carrying a sieve screen,

a cover to enclose a space above the sieve screen to contain material to be separated,

10 a hopper to collect fines passing through the sieve screen,

at least one inner seal to seal between the cover and the hopper around the circumference of the screen frame when the apparatus is in use,

a sheath surrounding said inner seal,

15 at least one outer seal to seal between the sheath and at least one of the cover and the hopper to provide an enclosed volume between the sheath, the cover and the hopper,

20 and an inlet connecting to said enclosed space to enable said enclosed space to be pressurised.

28. Apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein said chassis is adapted to support a circular sieve frame and said sleeve is cylindrical.

25

29. Apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein said sleeve includes an inverted flange which engages and seals to the

bottom of the chassis adjacent the inlet and outlet ports.

31. Apparatus according to any of Claims 27 to 30 including one said outer seal between the sheath and the hopper.

5 32. Apparatus according to Claim 31, wherein said outer seal between the sheath and hopper comprises a first seal between the hopper and the chassis and a second seal between the chassis and the sheath.

10 33. A screen separator substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

ABSTRACT

IMPROVEMENTS IN SCREEN SEPARATORS

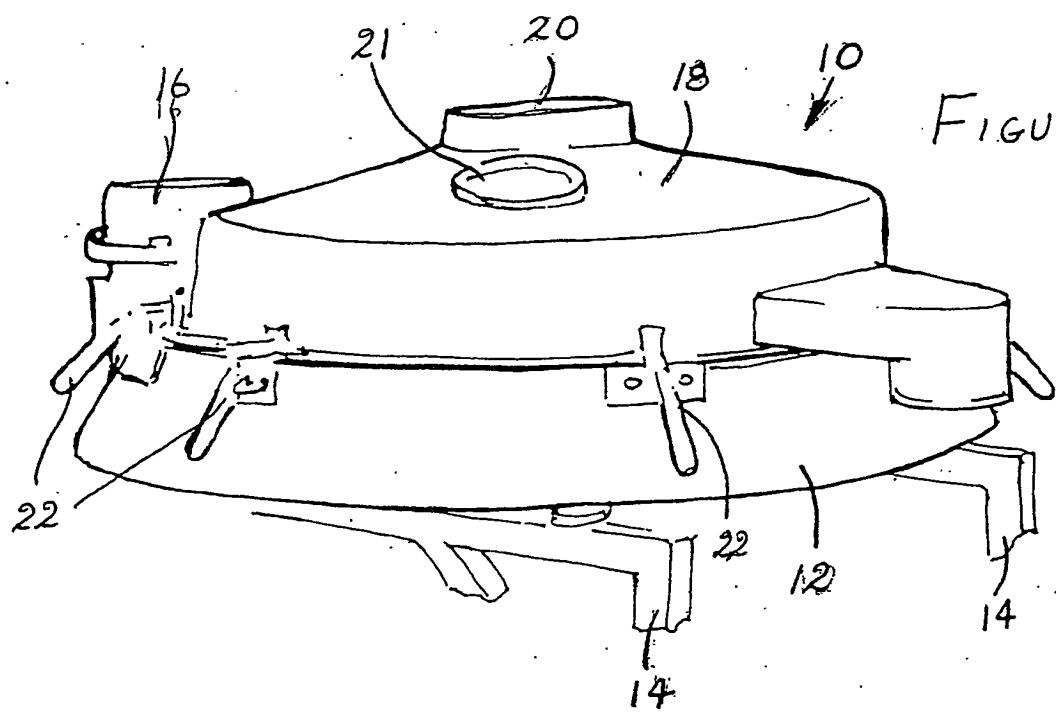
5 Apparatus is provided, in or for a screen separator for sieving materials, for clamping one or more sieve screen frames within the confines of a chassis of the separator to prevent egress of material from the separator. The apparatus comprises a sheath extending around and embracing
10 the chassis and one or more expandable elements for urging the sheath against the chassis and the screen frame(s) to impart uniform clamping pressure to the clamped elements. The sheath is designed to provide ease of mounting and release.

15

20

25

FIGURE 1



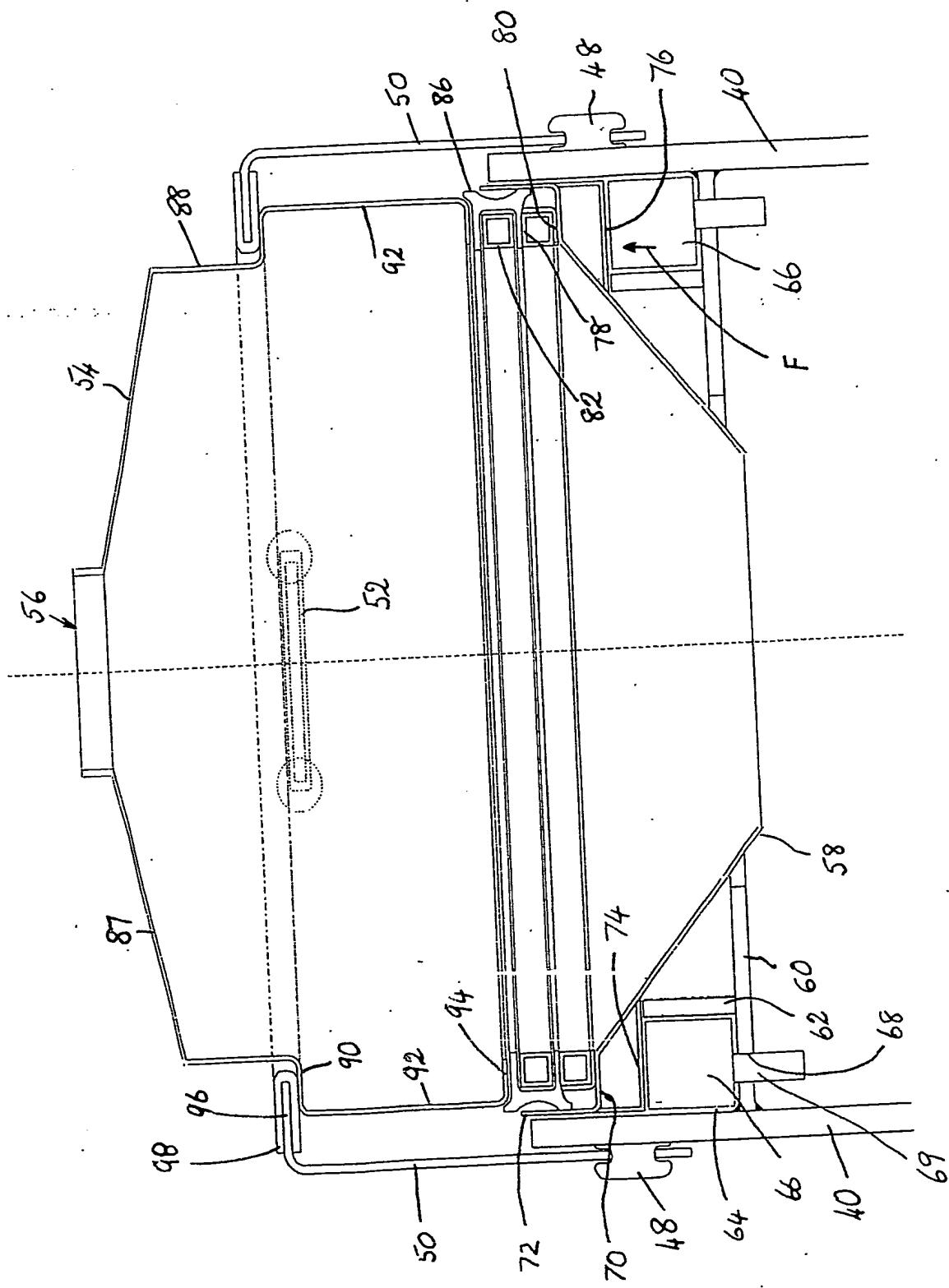


FIGURE 2

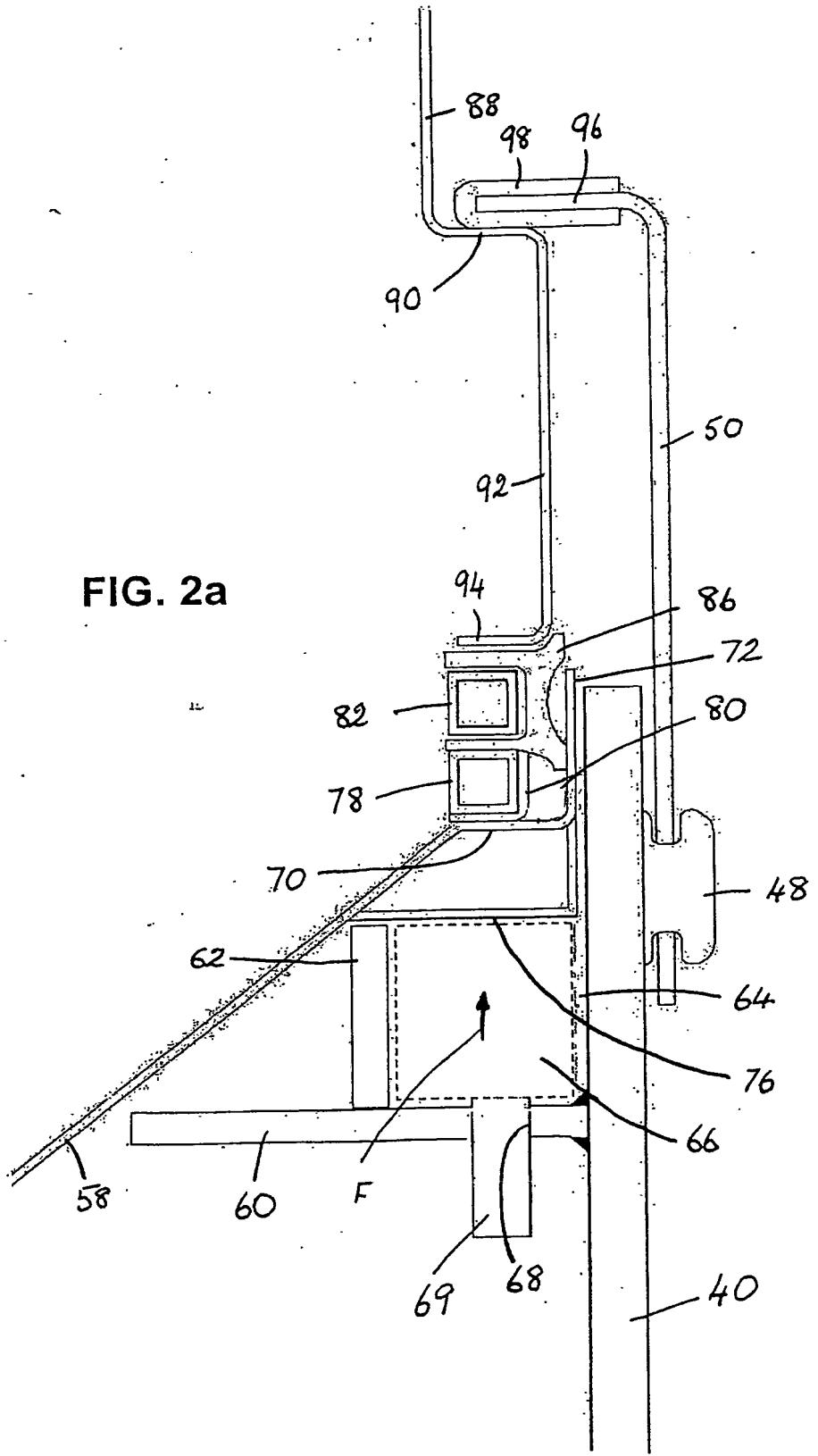
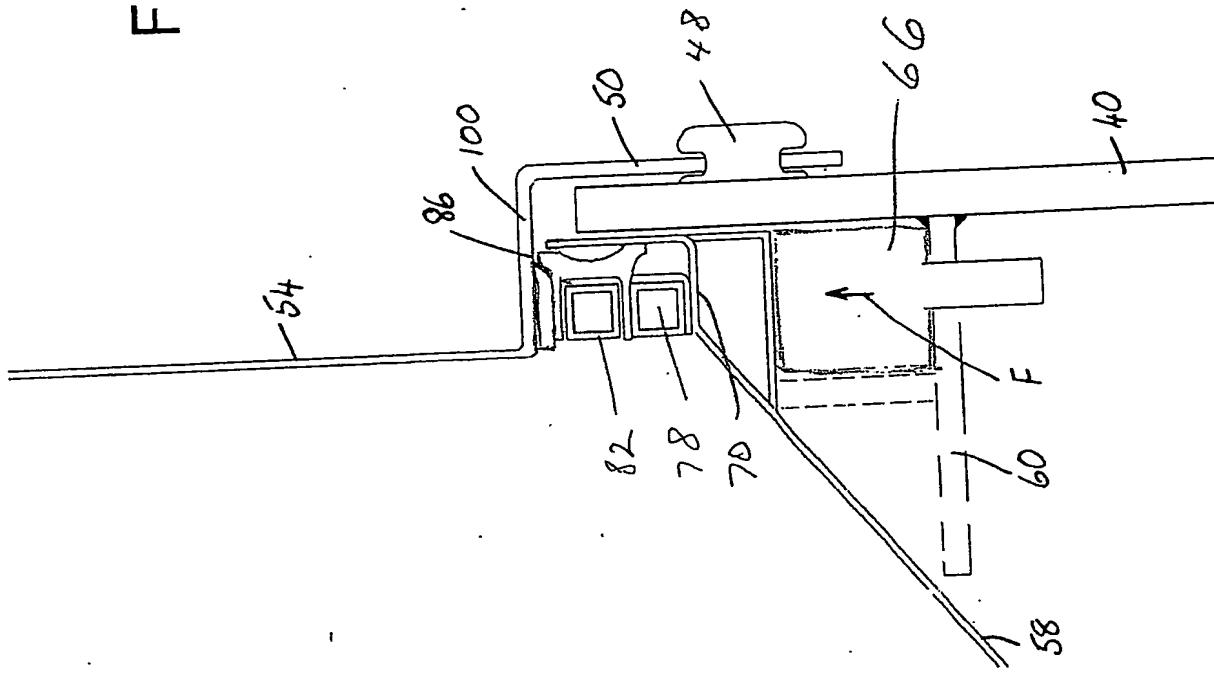


FIGURE 3



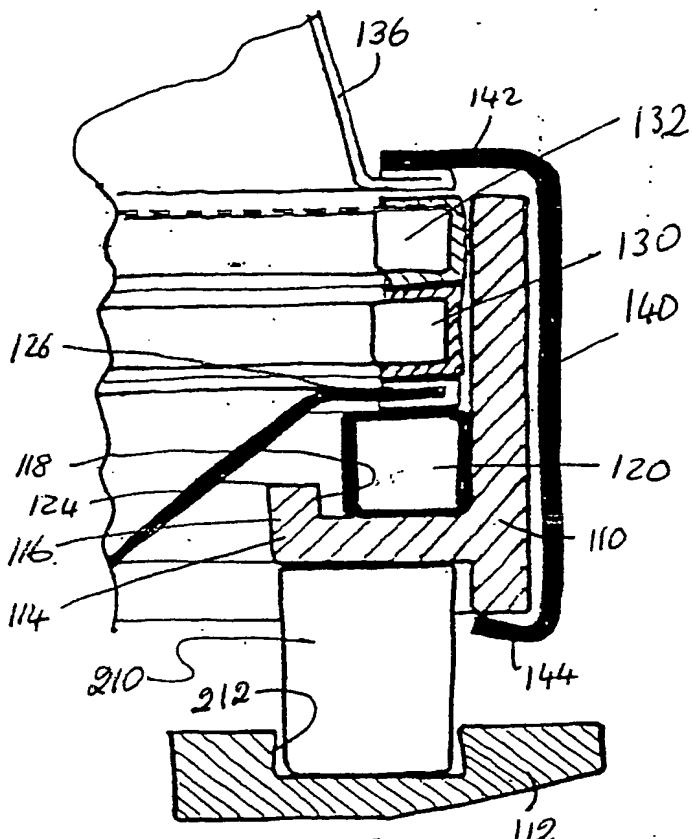


FIGURE 5

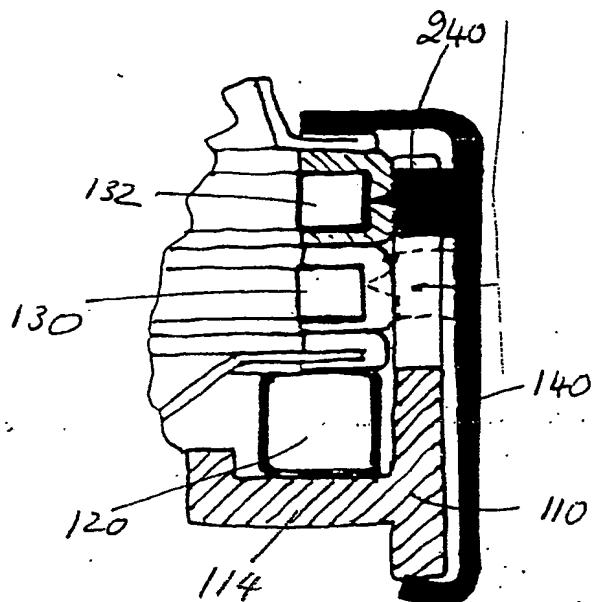


FIGURE 6.

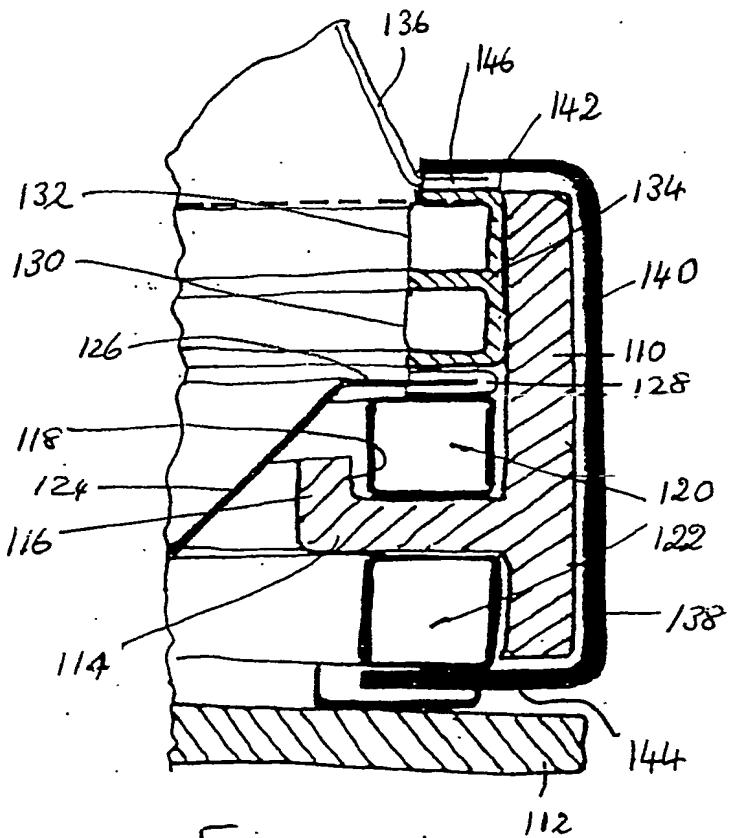


FIGURE 4

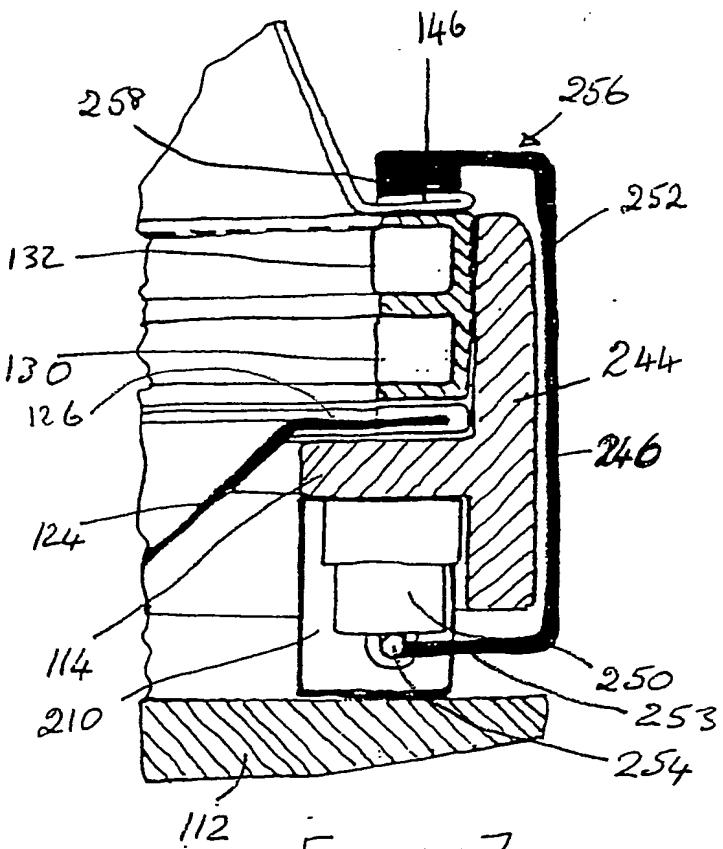


FIGURE 7

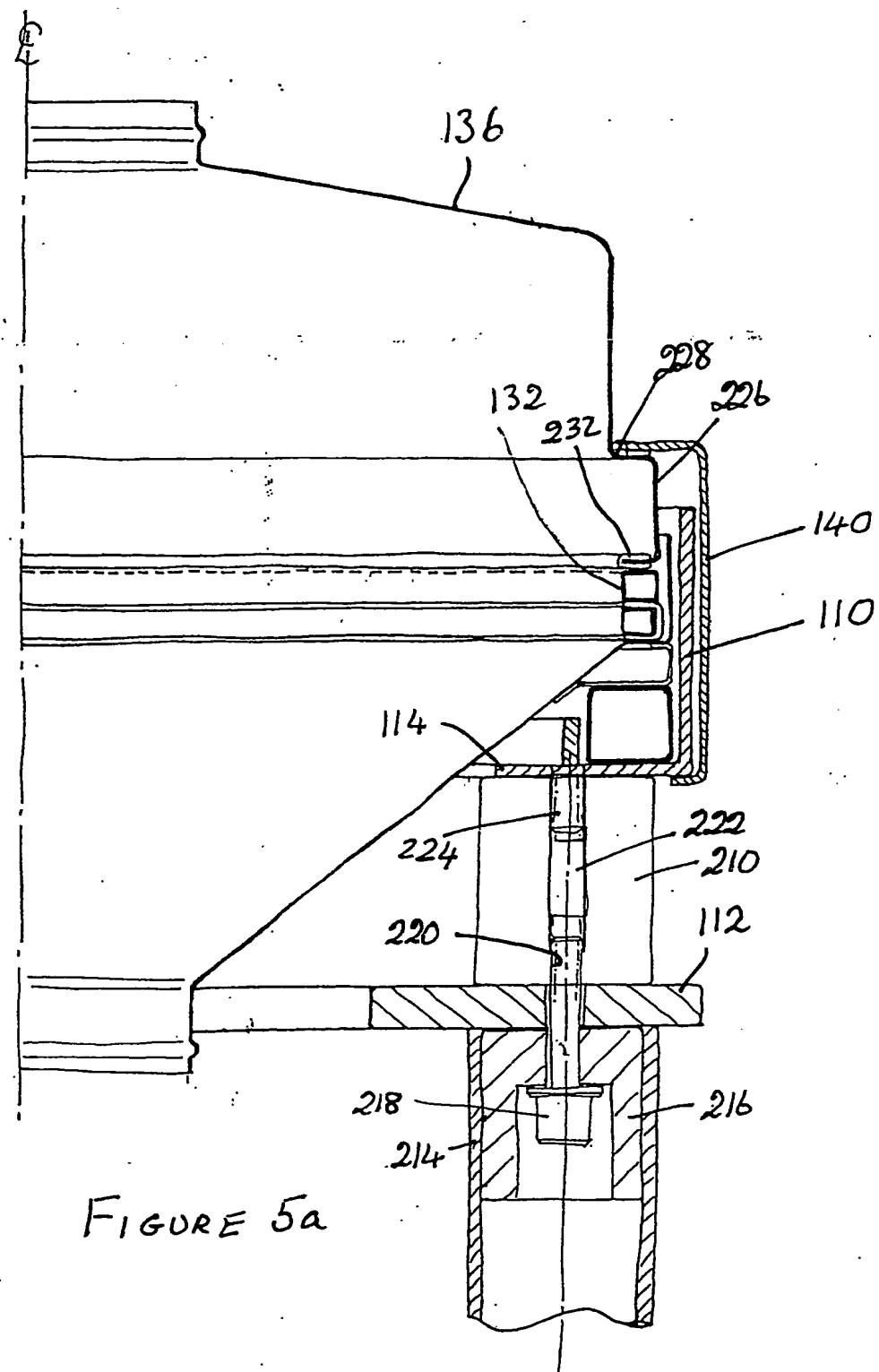


FIGURE 5a

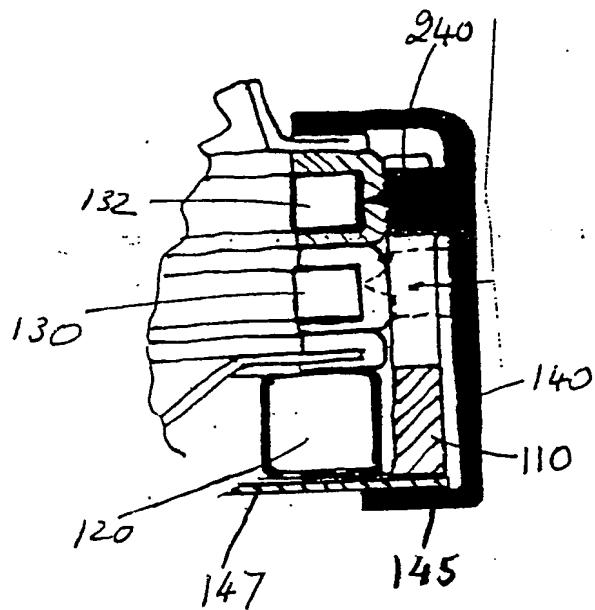
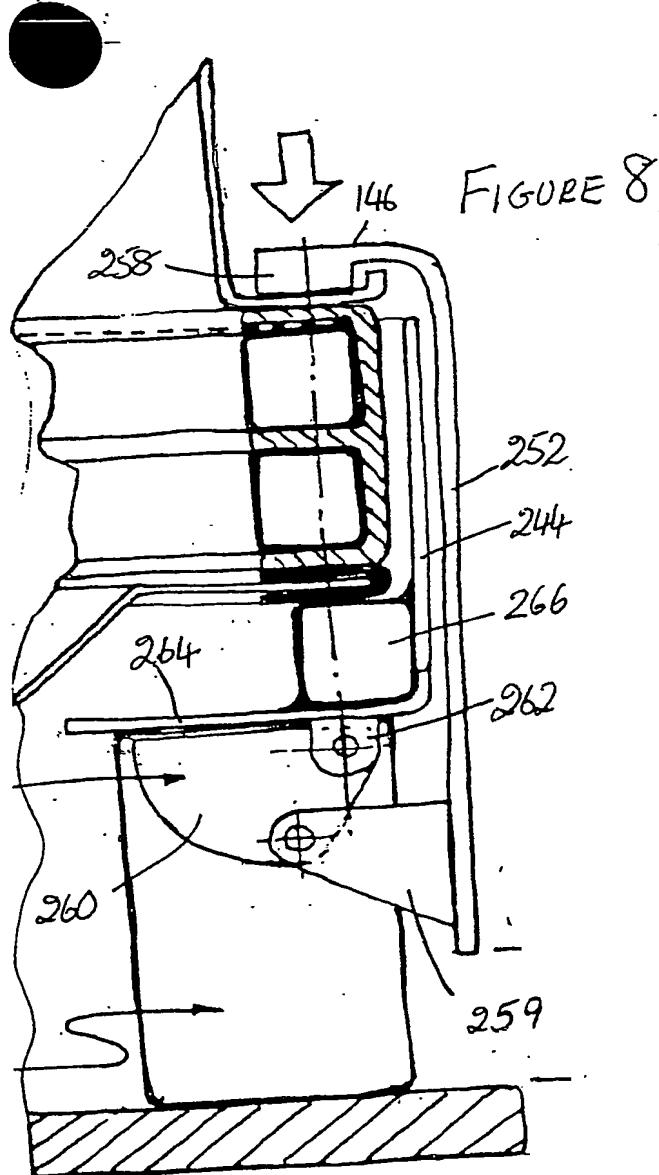
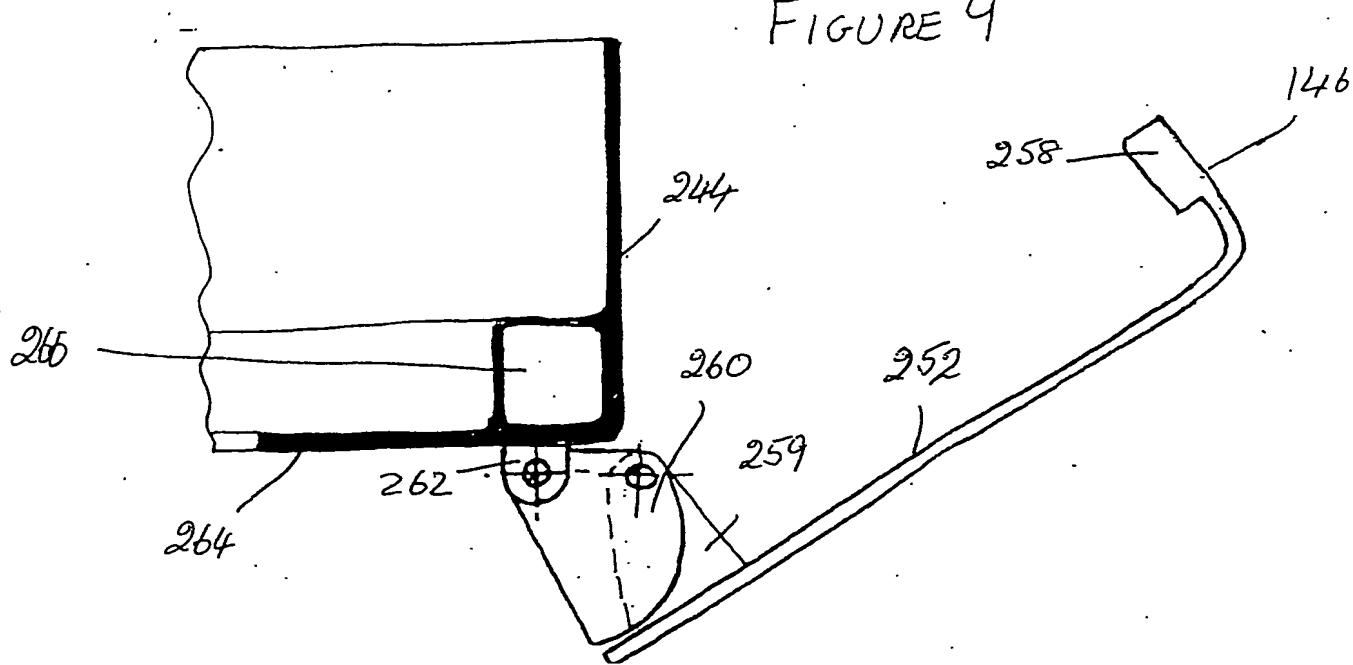


FIGURE 6a



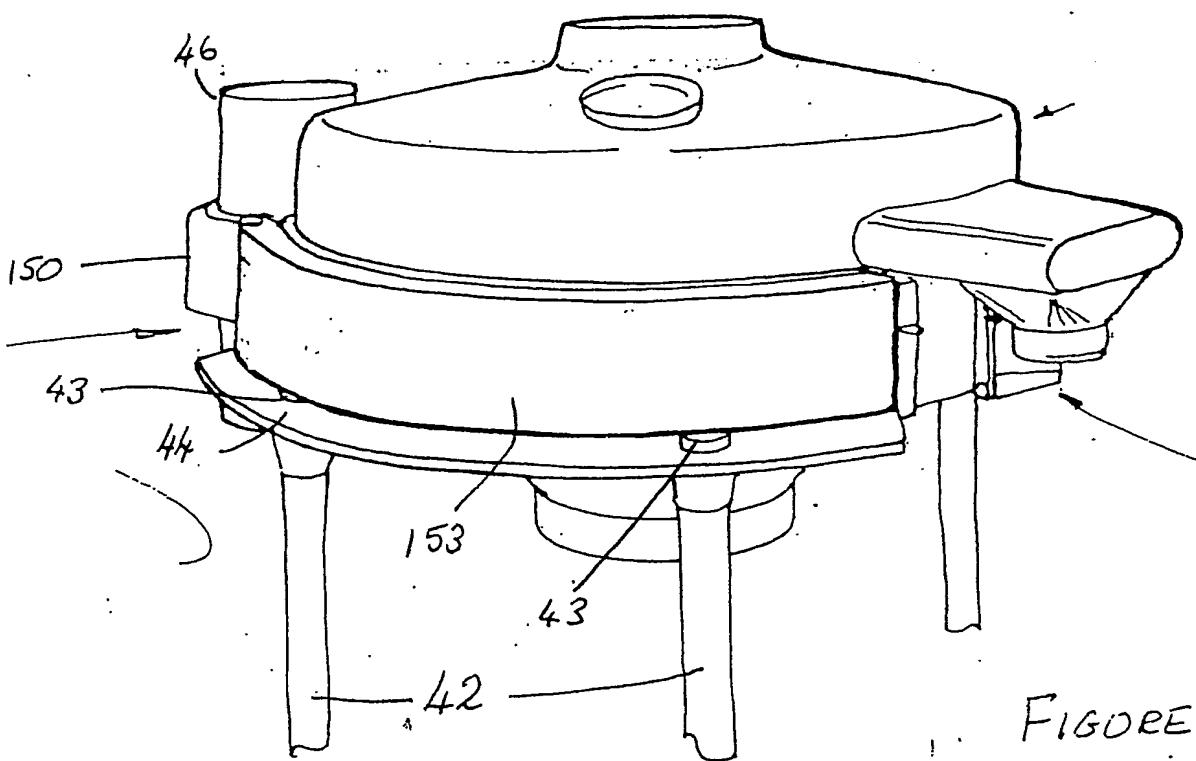


FIGURE 10

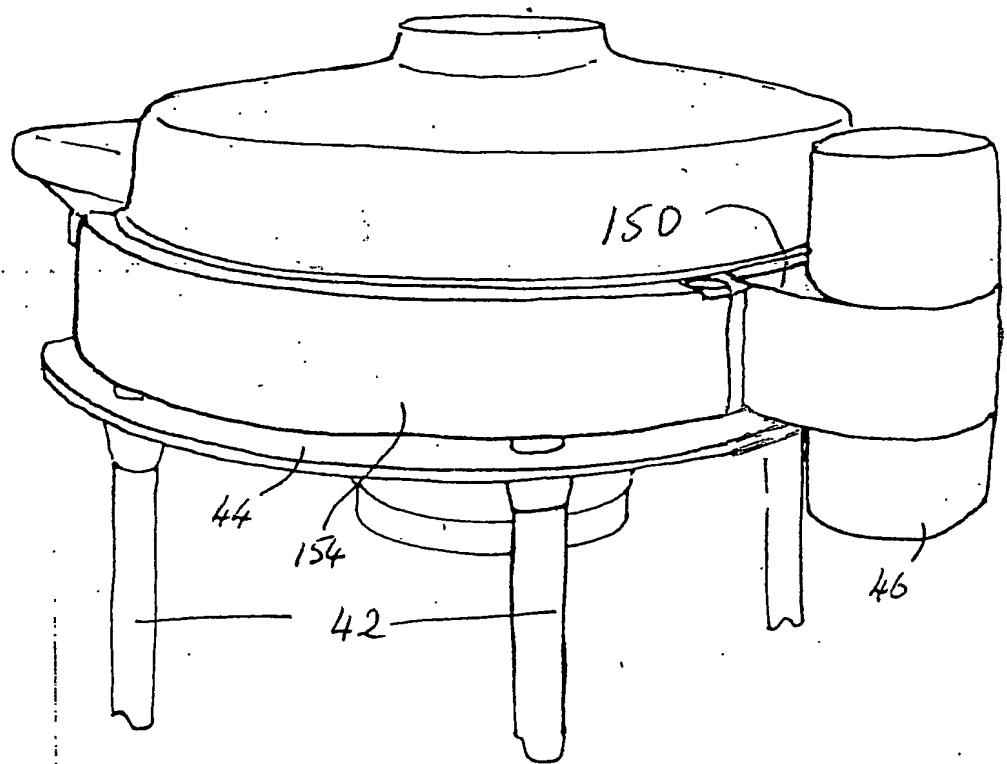


FIGURE 11

FIGURE 11a

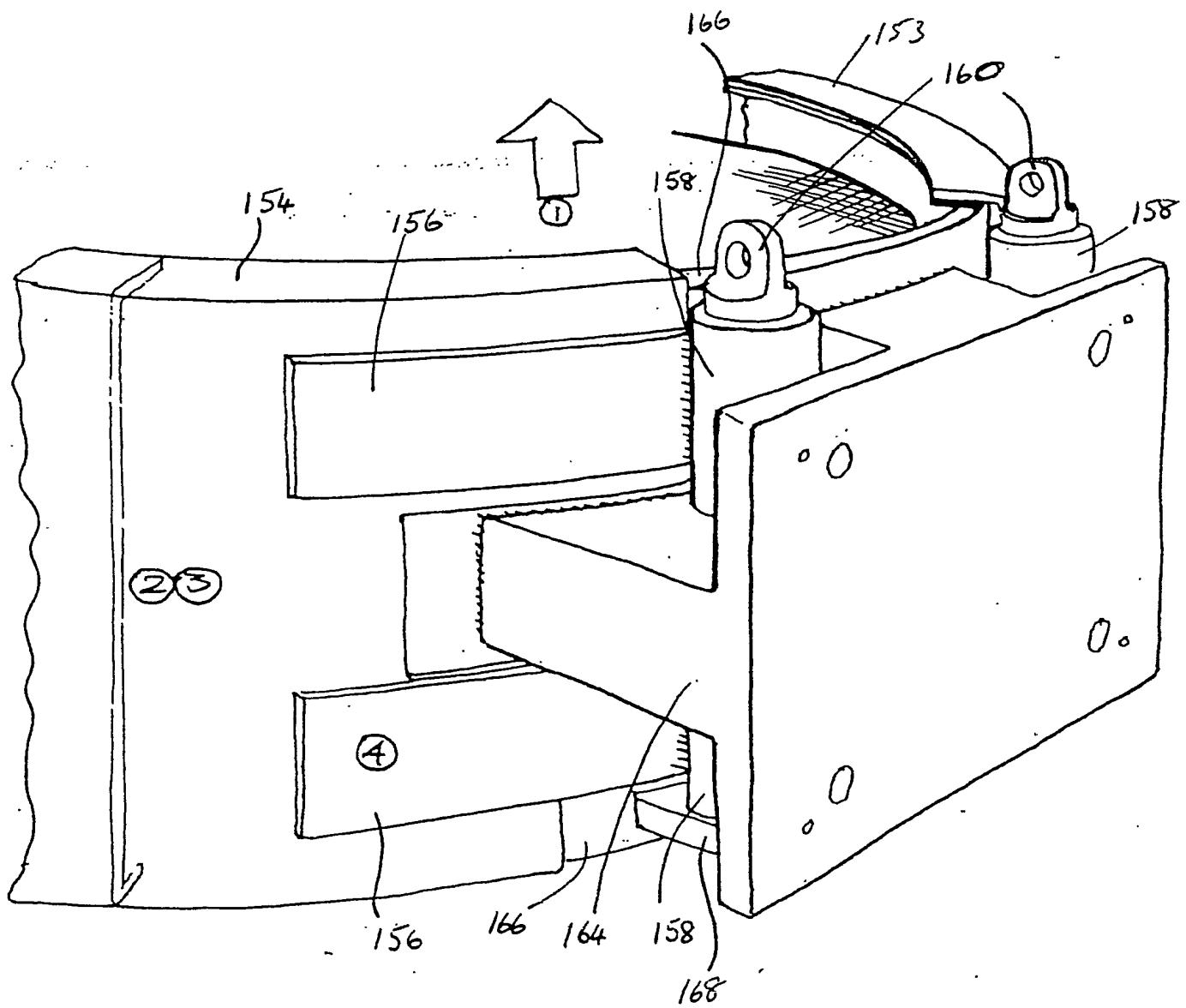
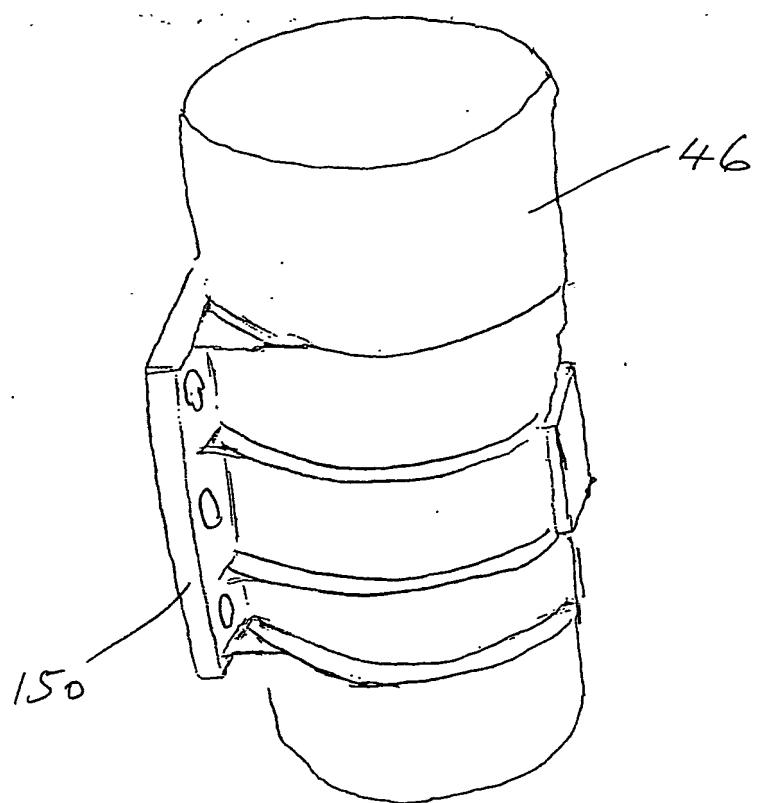
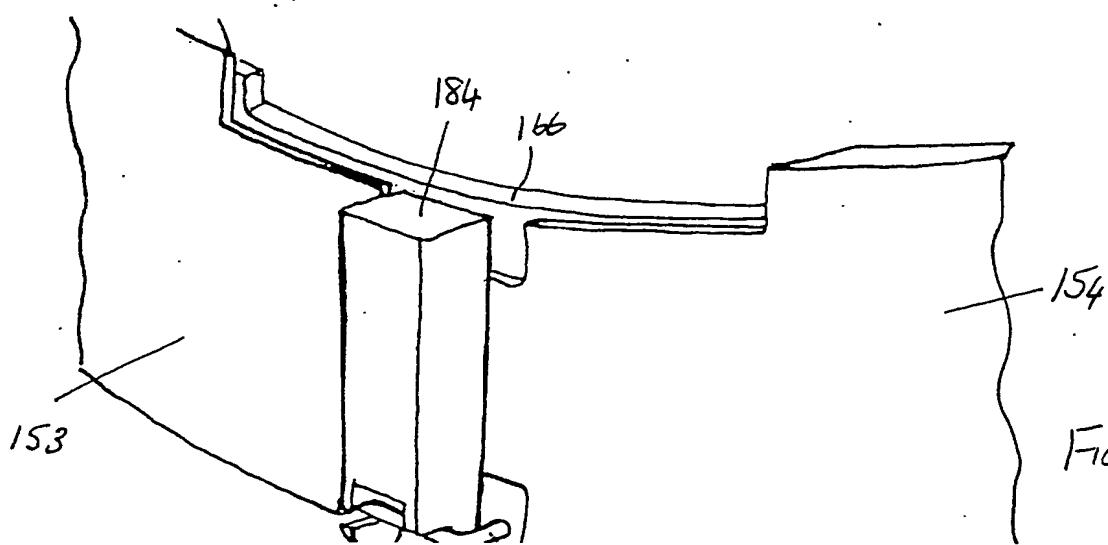
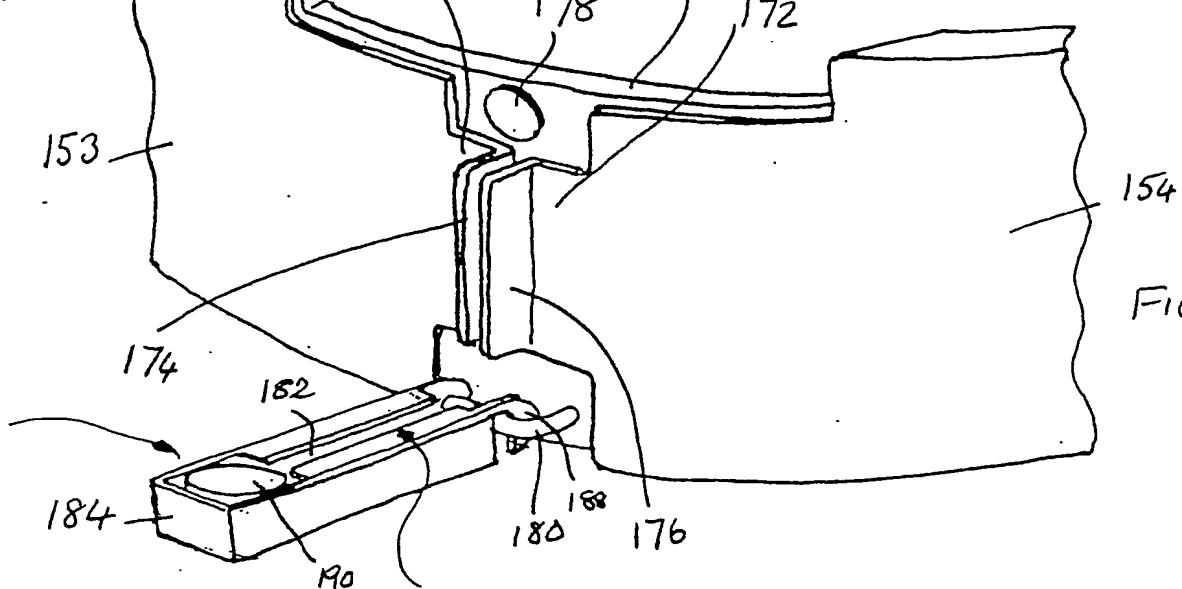
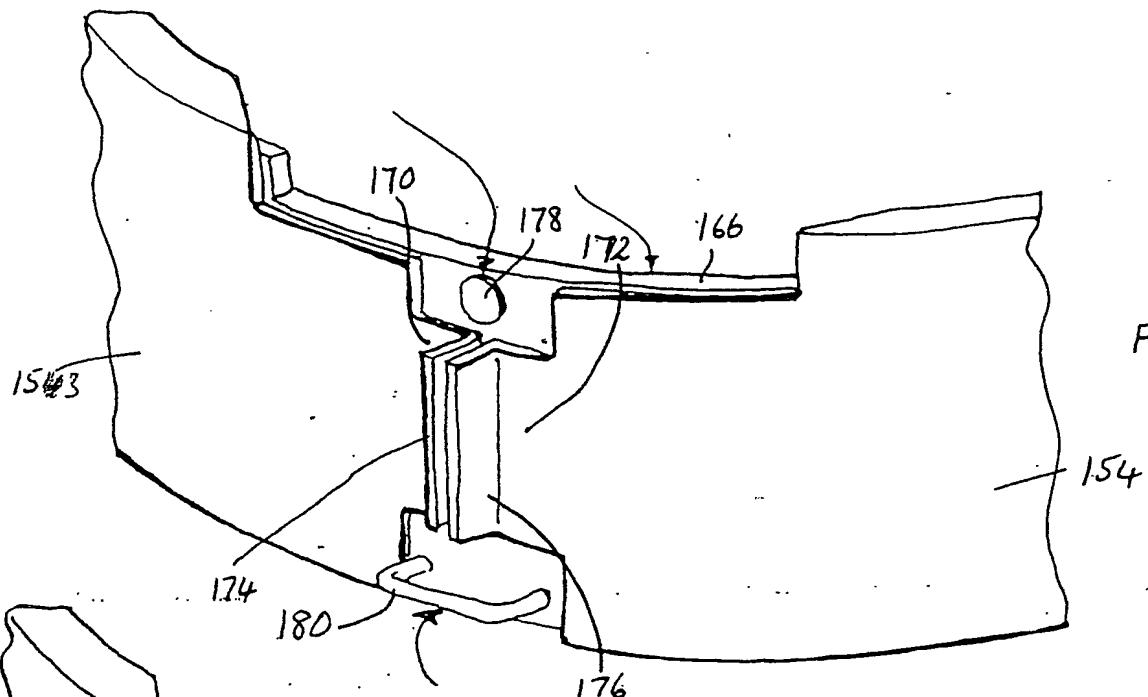


Fig 11 b





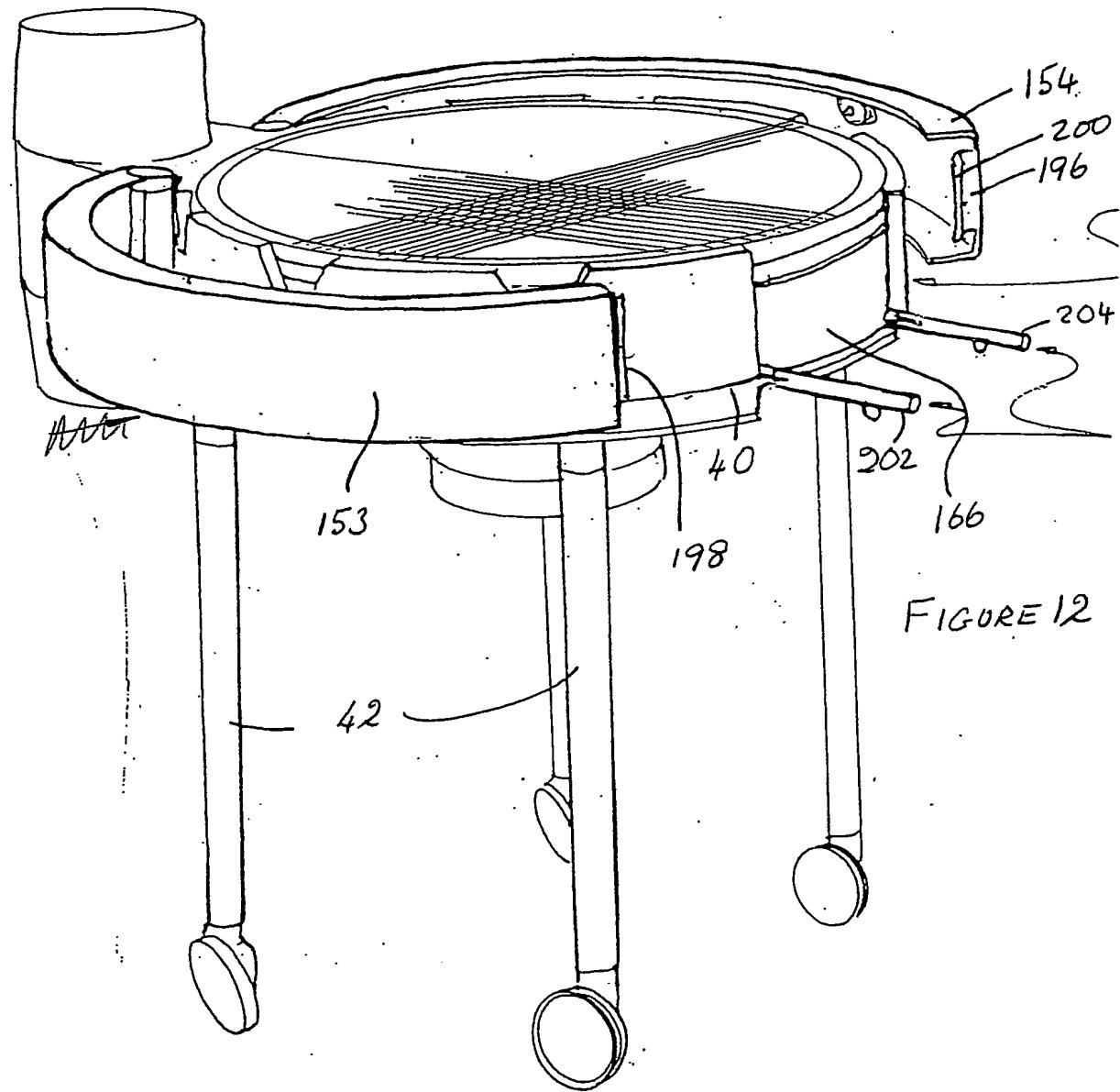


FIGURE 12

FIGURE 13

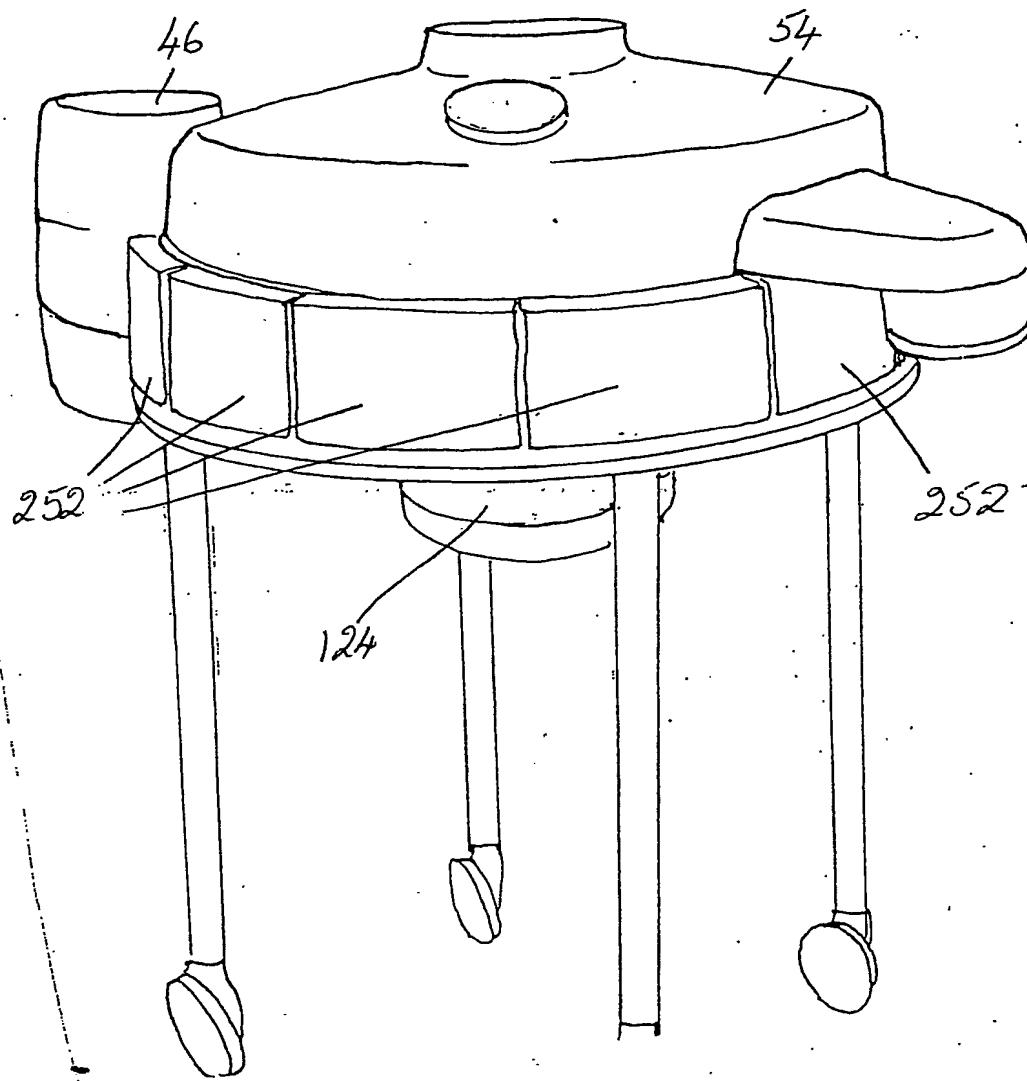


FIGURE 14

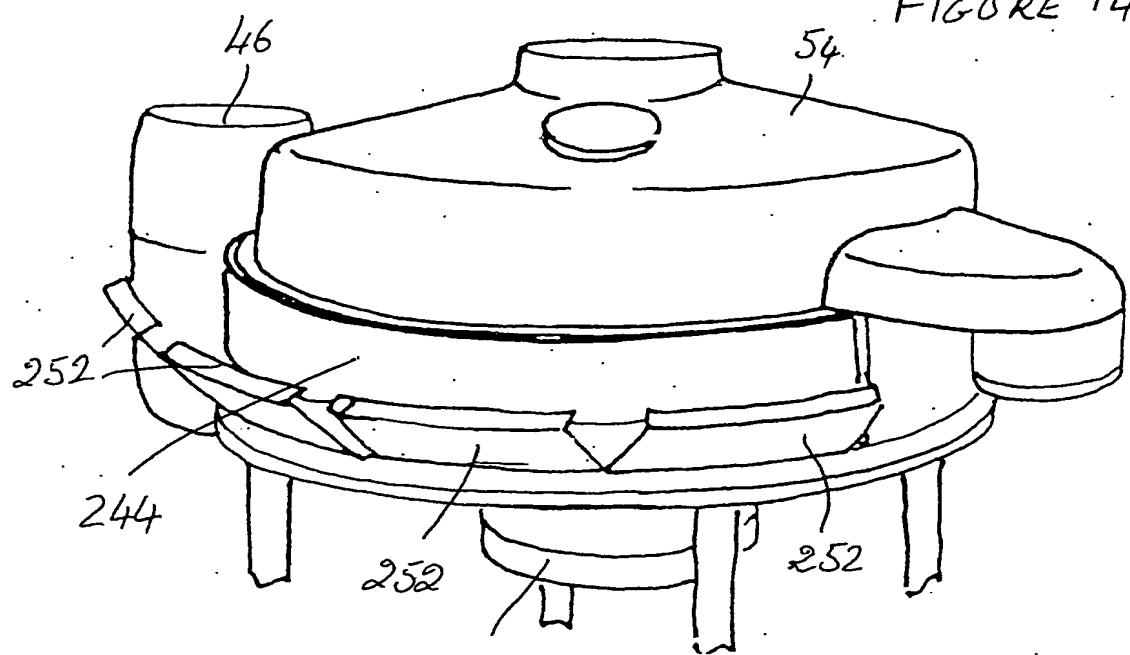


Fig 15

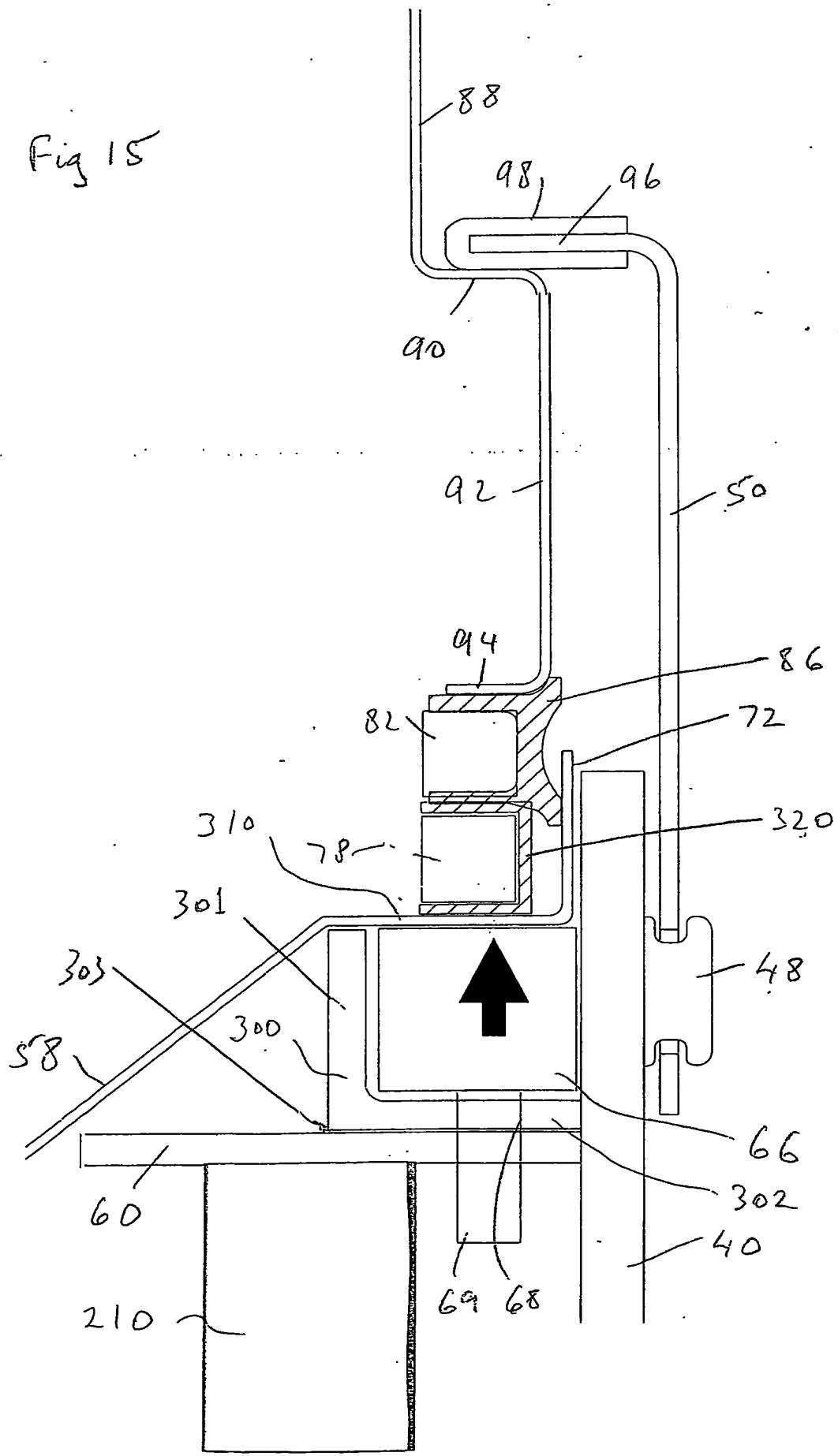
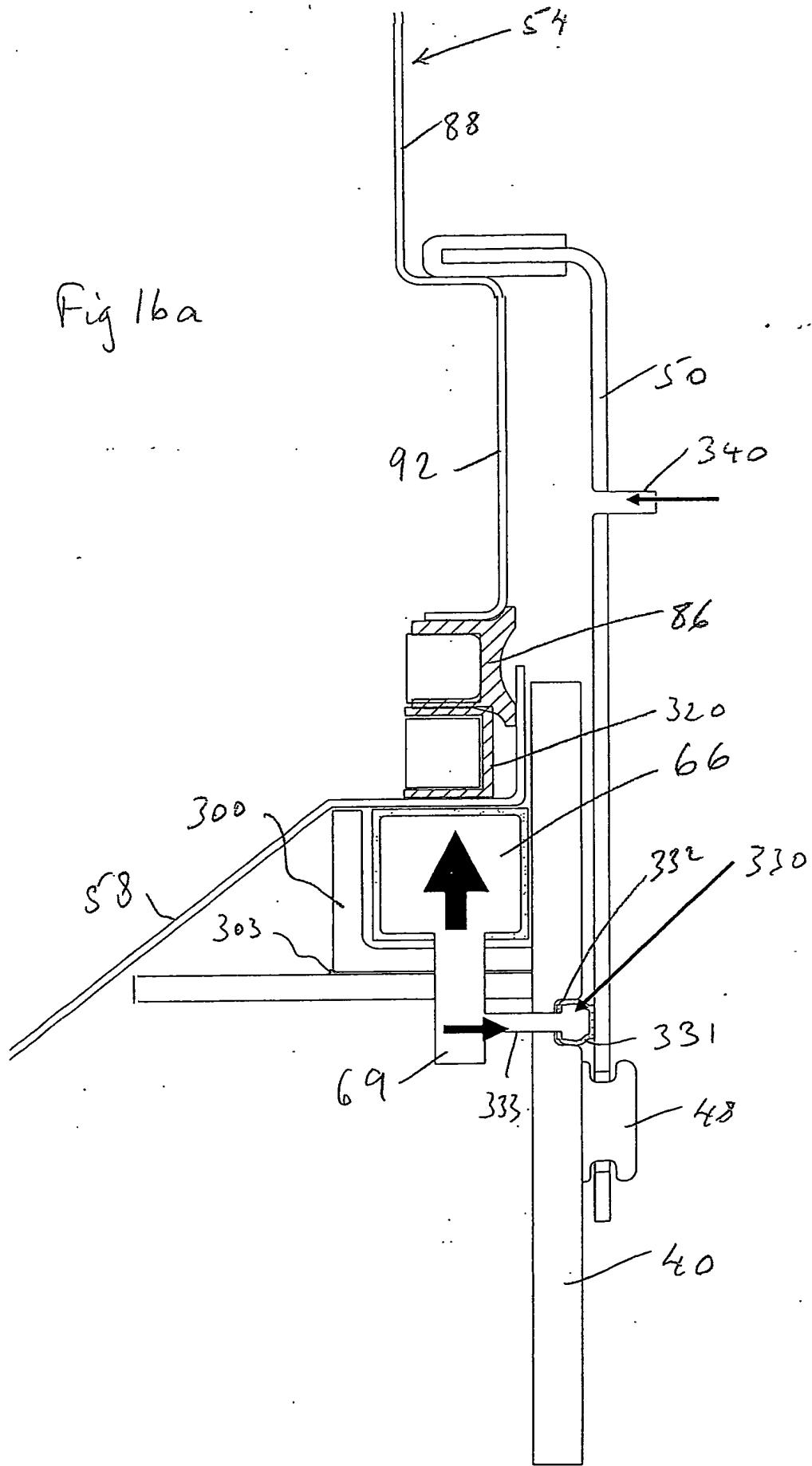
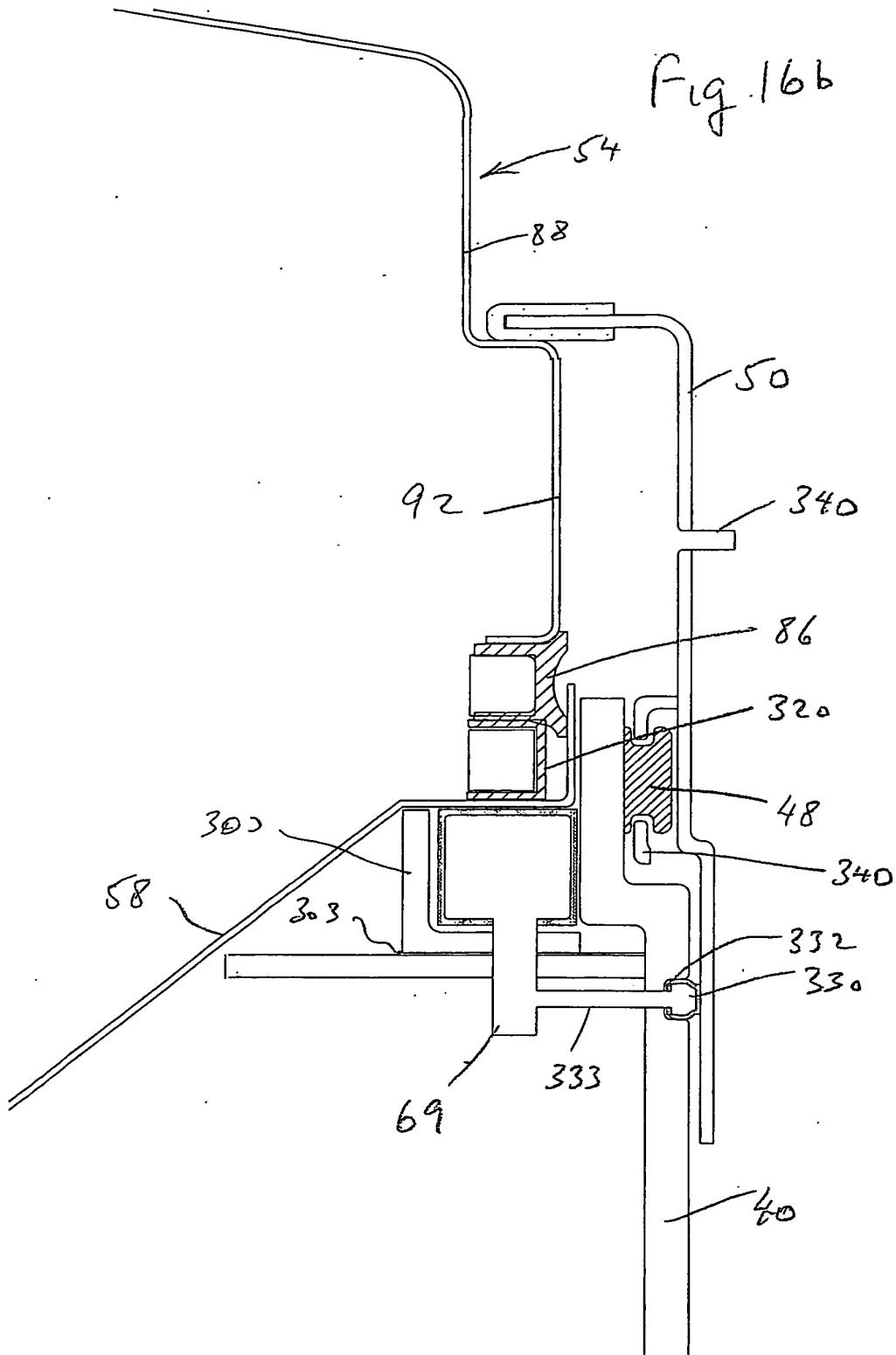


Fig 16a





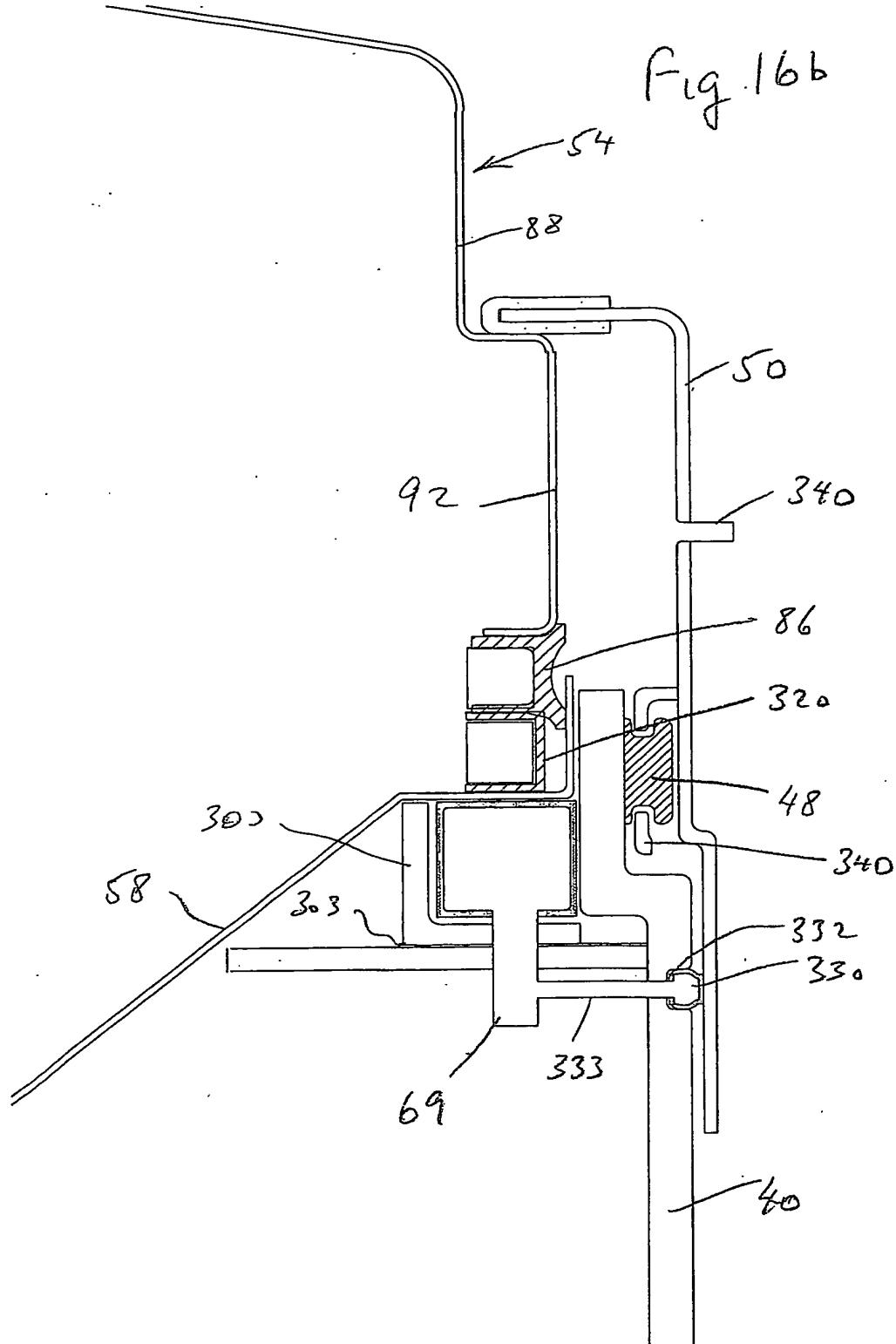
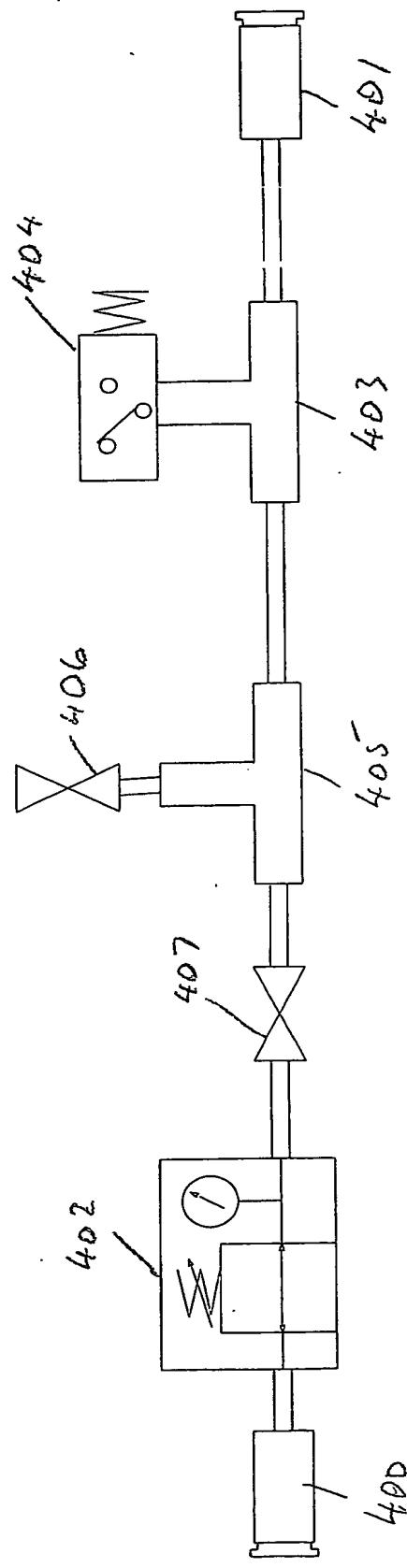


Fig 17



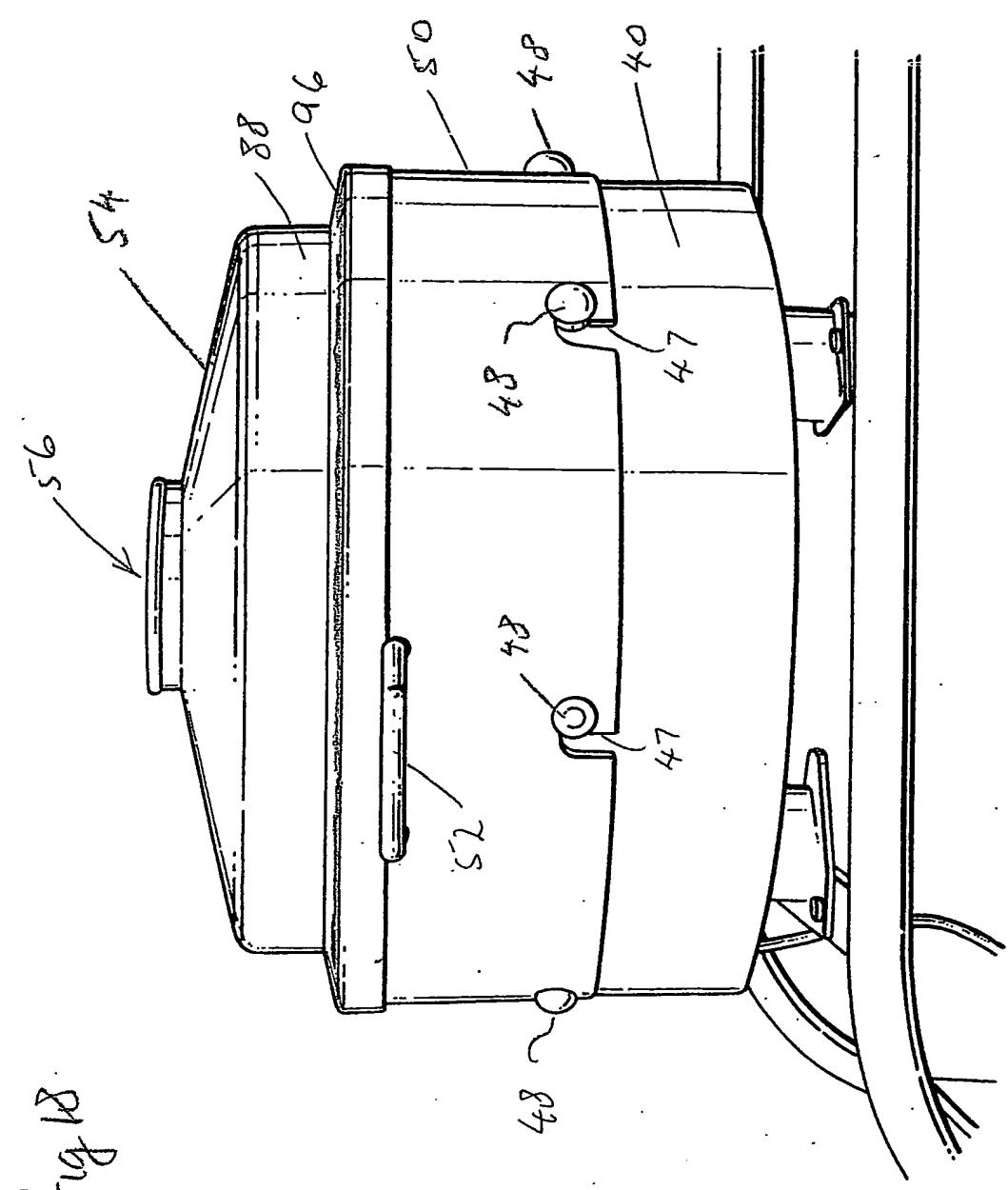
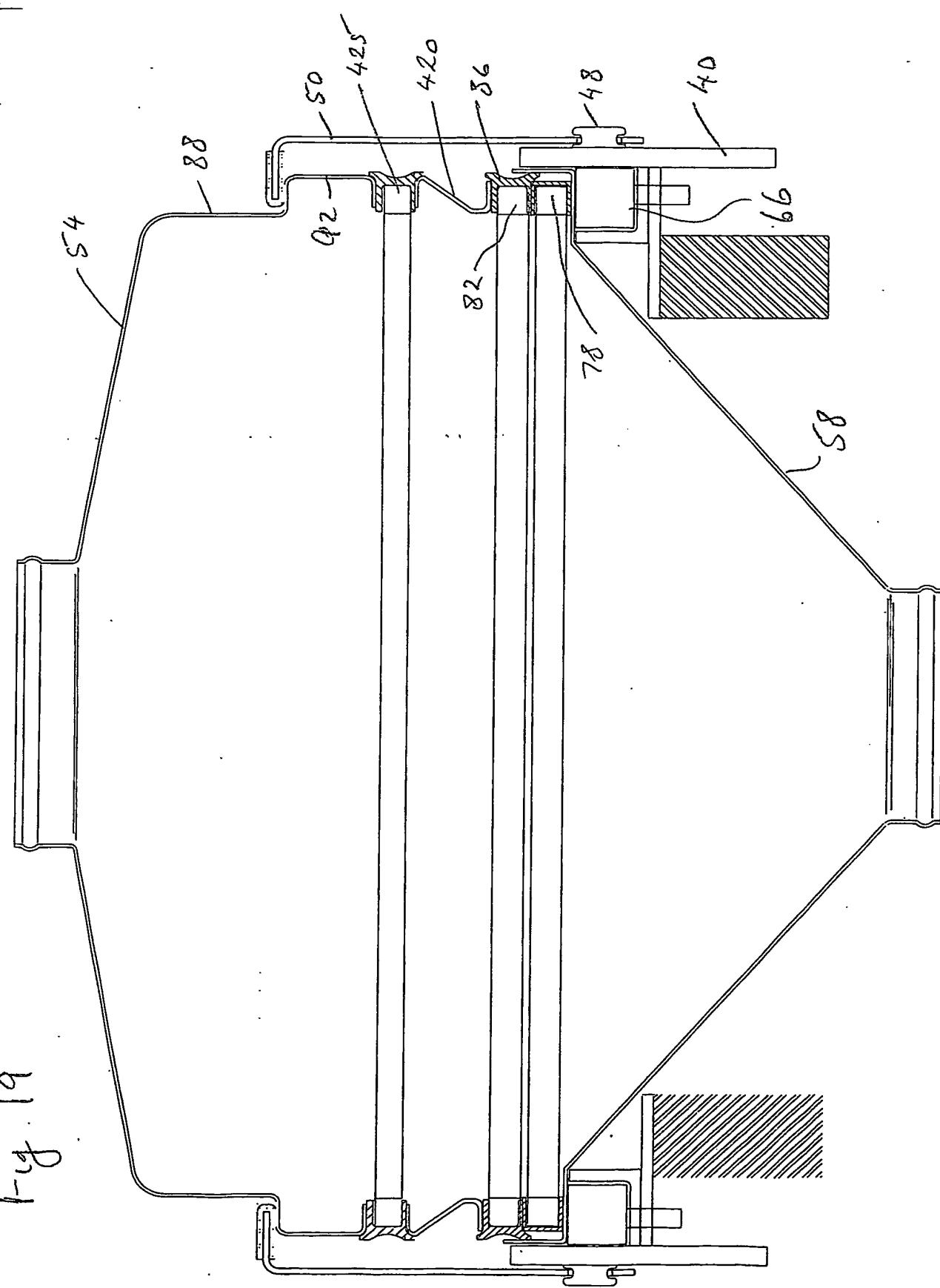
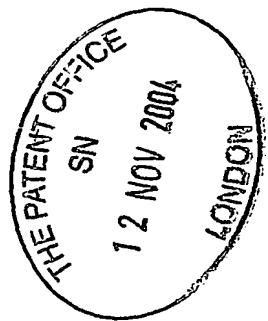


Fig 18

Fig. 19





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